

# THE CLIMATE CRISIS IS A (NEO)COLONIAL CAPITALIST CRISIS:

Experiences, responses and steps  
towards decolonising climate action



european network against racism

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# Foreword

**At ENAR we aim to combat structural racism, and to achieve equity and justice for racialised communities in Europe. The climate crisis is a crisis of injustice, and climate and environmental racism are specific examples of structural racism that are driven by (neo)colonial capitalism.**

With this report we have tried to amplify the experiences of racialised communities in Europe who are being displaced from their homes and ancestral lands, suffering with higher risks of illness and lower life expectancies, living in unsafe and undignified conditions and being systematically ignored by national governments, European institutions and white-centred climate organising.

We have also shared community-led resistance models across Europe for inspiration to prioritise the lives/needs of racialised people, with recommendations for policymakers and activists alike on how to take decolonising and anti-racist climate action.

In public discourse we often hear political leaders and actors in the climate movement discussing the idea of protecting future generations to come, yet, fail to recognise that the livelihoods and futures of many marginalised communities are already at risk of perishing due to climate disruption. The severe realities of the climate crisis outlined in this report and further afield are not hints or clues to future events in a storyline. The climate crisis is happening **here** and **now**, and racialised communities worldwide are already facing its harsh consequences.

We are calling for climate justice movements, local authorities, national governments and European policy makers to reflect on the historical conditions that have caused this crisis, and the (neo)colonial policies and practices that continue to fail racialised communities in Europe.

Climate justice for all will only be achieved if policy makers, activists and journalists alike share political will to centre impacted communities, to hold states, corporations and militaries to account, to provide reparations and climate debt, and to ensure that all European communities are having their fundamental rights met.

Karen Taylor  
Chair  
European Network Against Racism (ENAR)

# Section 1: Introduction



**To address any problem, we must reckon with its root cause. The climate crisis is one of the largest existential threats known to humankind, and yet European efforts on the state-level and in the mainstream climate movement have largely focused on symptom-treatment prior to the last few years, revolving around reducing carbon emissions and sustainable development. While the reduction (or in fact, elimination) of emissions and ‘greening’ production is a necessary ingredient, it is a band-aid on the bullet-wound that is at its base a colonial capitalist crisis. This crisis has racist roots and consequences, which we need to address to achieve true climate justice.**

While impoverished communities in the Global South are undoubtedly hardest hit by the climate crisis as we have seen with droughts in Sudan and hurricanes in the Caribbean, racialised communities in Europe are also specifically and disproportionately impacted. From Roma communities across Europe, to the Indigenous Sámi in Northern Europe and refugees on the Greek islands, racialised communities are increasingly exposed to warming temperatures, changes in weather patterns, in biodiversity and other examples of climate disruption. To be clear, this is not some future threat for these communities. **Many European climate movements discuss taking action for future generations,<sup>1</sup> but the climate crisis is unfolding here and now for many racialised communities.** This report intends to provide a platform for these communities’ stories, and to prompt strategic, decolonising, and anti-racist climate action, based on these experiences, and our analyses of historical and systemic inequalities.

## **(Neo)Colonial Capitalism**

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**It is not a coincidence or a geo-physical accident that racialised communities are amongst the hardest hit by the climate crisis, worldwide including in Europe.<sup>2</sup> Often, their disproportionate exposure is a result of interactions between climactic changes and structural**

**racism, resulting in racialised people being denied employment, income, a healthy and safe environment and access to political decision-making. This too is no coincidence. Europe’s history of (neo)colonial capitalism, underpinned by racism, facilitated by states and large corporations, has made it so.**

(Neo)colonialism and capitalism are bedfellows. The Amsterdam stock exchange, one of the first in the world, hosted shares in the Dutch East India Company and Dutch West India Company, the two first public companies.<sup>3</sup> These companies were part of the fundamentally extractive project that is colonialism. The goal is to occupy and extract wealth, resources, and labour from a region outside of one’s own, and capitalism provided and continues to provide the economic framework to do this. (Neo) colonialism is underpinned by racism and white supremacy; creating a racial hierarchy with white people atop it justifies exploiting racialised communities.<sup>4</sup> **Capitalism as a political, social and economic system allowed for the accumulation of wealth and profit for white, wealthy Europeans at the expense of their colonial subjects.** It accounts for continued Racialised inequality today.

The aforementioned exploitation has taken many forms throughout history; from slavery and indentured labour - or the exploitation of Black and Brown labour and lives, the appropriation of Indigenous lands and resources for profit - to unregulated agro-business practices and the establishment of (neo)colonial militaries to act upon formerly colonised nations. **A necessary element of (neo)colonial capitalism is exclusion; whatever wealth is extracted and appropriated by those atop the racial hierarchy, is always at the expense of racialised communities.**

Despite many successful resistance movements for independence driving colonial occupying forces out of the Global South in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, **(neo)colonial structures and policies have taken new shapes and forms to maintain global power imbalances.** Today, racialised

1 “On Class and Climate Struggle: Decolonising XR,” *Freedom News*, (19 October). See [here](#).

2 Leon Sealey-Huggins, “The climate crisis is a racist crisis: structural racism, inequality and climate change,” in *The fire now: Anti-racist scholarship in times of explicit racial violence*, eds. Azeizat Johnson, Remi Joseph-Salisbury and i and Beth Kamunge (London, UK: Zed Books, 2018). Pp. 99 – 113. See [here](#).

3 Oscar Gelderblom and Joost Jonker, “Completing a financial revolution: The finance of the Dutch East India trade and the rise of the Amsterdam capital market, 1595-1612,” *Journal of Economic History* (2004): 641-672. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3874815>

4 Keeanga-YamahttaTaylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Liberation*, (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2016).

communities face setbacks due to this domination of knowledge-production and wealth extraction. They continue to have little sovereignty over their lands and communities, and suffer new forms of colonialism propagated by nation-states and corporations; such as keeping the global financial system as a tool for extraction of wealth for the benefit of the global North, mining for petroleum and rare earth metals, and exploitative foreign policies.

The setbacks caused by (neo)colonial capitalism are exacerbated and reinforced by climate breakdown. Take Martinique and Guadeloupe – these islands in the French Antilles were denied any semblance of a local economy due to slavery and land use for cash crops like sugarcane and banana to export to Europe. It is no wonder that these islands cannot afford to reinforce their homes against hurricanes, and cannot pay for the repairs and rebuilding necessary in their wake. Some have termed this climate violence,<sup>5</sup> others more specifically climate racism.<sup>6</sup> These terms build forth on the scholarship and activism on environmental racism, a concept first used in the United States in the 1980s. Conceptualising of this experience as specific, targeted racism is important to understanding and combating it.

## Historical responsibility

**It is crucial that our contemporary analyses of the climate crisis address its historical dimensions and legacies, namely the systems that produce and reproduce the conditions that cause this crisis. This historicism is key to recognise and understand the contemporary dynamics of the climate crisis, to ensure that the solutions we propose will achieve climate justice for all, and in turn, effectively tackle this crisis.**

Crucially, (neo)colonial capitalism has not only meant that the climate crisis hits racialised communities hardest; it is in fact the root cause of the climate crisis. There is an increasing acceptance among more mainstream climate organisations and climate discourse that larger capitalist

forces are to fault for the climate crisis,<sup>7</sup> as large oil companies extract the earth's oil reserves. This produces massive emissions to line the pockets of their executive suite, meanwhile the communities living near the reserves are left deprived of the wealth generated. However, the (neo) colonial, racist roots of capitalism have gone unnoticed, or are actively ignored.

In terms of the climate crisis, these roots are most evident when looking at historical responsibility – who has caused or stimulated the majority of greenhouse gas emissions, oil extraction and other forms of exploitation that have led to the climate crisis? This responsibility, just like that for (neo)colonial capitalism, lies squarely on the continent of Europe, and in large part, also with North America. The regions and countries that extract wealth and resources from other regions based on a (neo)colonial capitalist order are also the ones extracting the most fossil fuels, burning them fastest and emitting at the highest rates. This 'top position' for Europe and North America is the case for many related consumption-oriented industries that are destroying our climate and environment. This includes the Military-industrial complex, fast-fashion industry, industrial agriculture and the industry that is always touted as the cure-all for the climate crisis, the tech industry. Clearly, the climate crisis cannot be divorced from its (neo)colonial roots and racist impacts.

## Decolonising Climate Action

**Accepting that the climate crisis is deeply embedded in Europe's particular racist, (neo)colonial capitalist history implicates the consequences for the solutions and actions we as societies undertake. It means making a fundamental commitment to the credo Black Lives Matter, and by extension to the anti-racist idea that all racialised lives, including Indigenous, refugee and migrant lives, matter. It means making a fundamental commitment to decolonisation, and to undoing all the systems that hold (neo)colonialism up, in the past and present. In order to do this and to take decolonised, anti-racist climate action, we first need to uncover the**

5 Daniel Voskoboynik, "A Guide to Climate Violence," *The World at 1C*, (9 February, 2019). See [here](#).

6 "Climate Liberation Bloc: Decolonizing the Dutch Climate Movement." *Mama Cash*, (November 8 2019). See [here](#).

7 Phili McDuff, "Ending climate change requires the end of capitalism. Have we got the stomach for it?" *The Guardian*, (18 March 2019). See [here](#).

**realities of racialised communities and their responses to the climate crisis. Engaging with these communities' specific histories of oppression and struggle is the true starting point for further action.**

While recent years have brought more scholarship on, and visibility to, the realities faced by racialised communities in the United States and the Global South, there is still not much known about how racialised communities in Europe are impacted by the climate crisis. In the wave of the Black Lives Matter protests that swept across Europe in the summer of 2020, the continent's history of (neo)colonialism was increasingly politicised by anti-racist activists. It is timely that we draw connections between this history and the climate crisis.

With this report, we hope to give an overview of some of these climate struggles playing out across the continent, how the impacted communities are responding, what can be learned from them and how we can take decolonising, and therefore anti-racist climate action, towards true climate justice. **This report is for anti-racist activists and movements trying to further understand what climate justice and climate action means to them, but also for climate activists who are interested in decolonising their own narratives and actions.**

Of course, patriarchy and many other forms of oppression are also implicated in the climate crisis and its consequences. This report will deal explicitly with the climate crisis' (neo)colonial foundation and its racist implications, but does not pretend to be exhaustive – patriarchy is also linked to (neo)colonialism, as are many other forms of oppression.<sup>8</sup> Take this document as a starting point to understand climate-related oppressions and the mechanisms behind it, and certainly not the finishing point.

The report is divided into four sections. The first section lays out a number of cases of racialised communities in Europe who are disproportionately and specifically impacted by the climate crisis, and related environmental destruction. Each community also offers their own

responses and best practices in their context, and their relative access to decision-making in terms of their own communities and climate. This first section also takes a look at the threat the far-right poses in terms of co-opting environmental and climate-related narratives, and how this trickles down and manifests in the mainstream climate movement, still largely white in Europe. The second section deals with some responses to this manifestation in the mainstream climate movement, as well as responses that are Europe-wide and not specific to the aforementioned community.

The third section discusses access to decision-making for racialised communities in Europe, in the context of local transitions away from fossil fuels, as well as on a European level in the context of the European Green Deal. These are large opportunities for racialised communities to finally gain the access and the equity they are due, yet the question remains whether a decolonising and anti-racist approach will be taken. The fourth and final section discusses an initial strategic framework for decolonising and anti-racist climate action, and some steps it could entail.

The ideas and experiences outlined in this report were gathered and developed in a number of ways. These included scouring the academic and non-academic literature – from journal articles to tweets, as well as conversations with members of racialised communities in Europe who are usually also anti-racist activists, climate activists and researchers concerned with the racist impacts of the climate crisis. We are grateful to these community members who offered their time and thoughts, and we hope that this report does their struggles and efforts justice.

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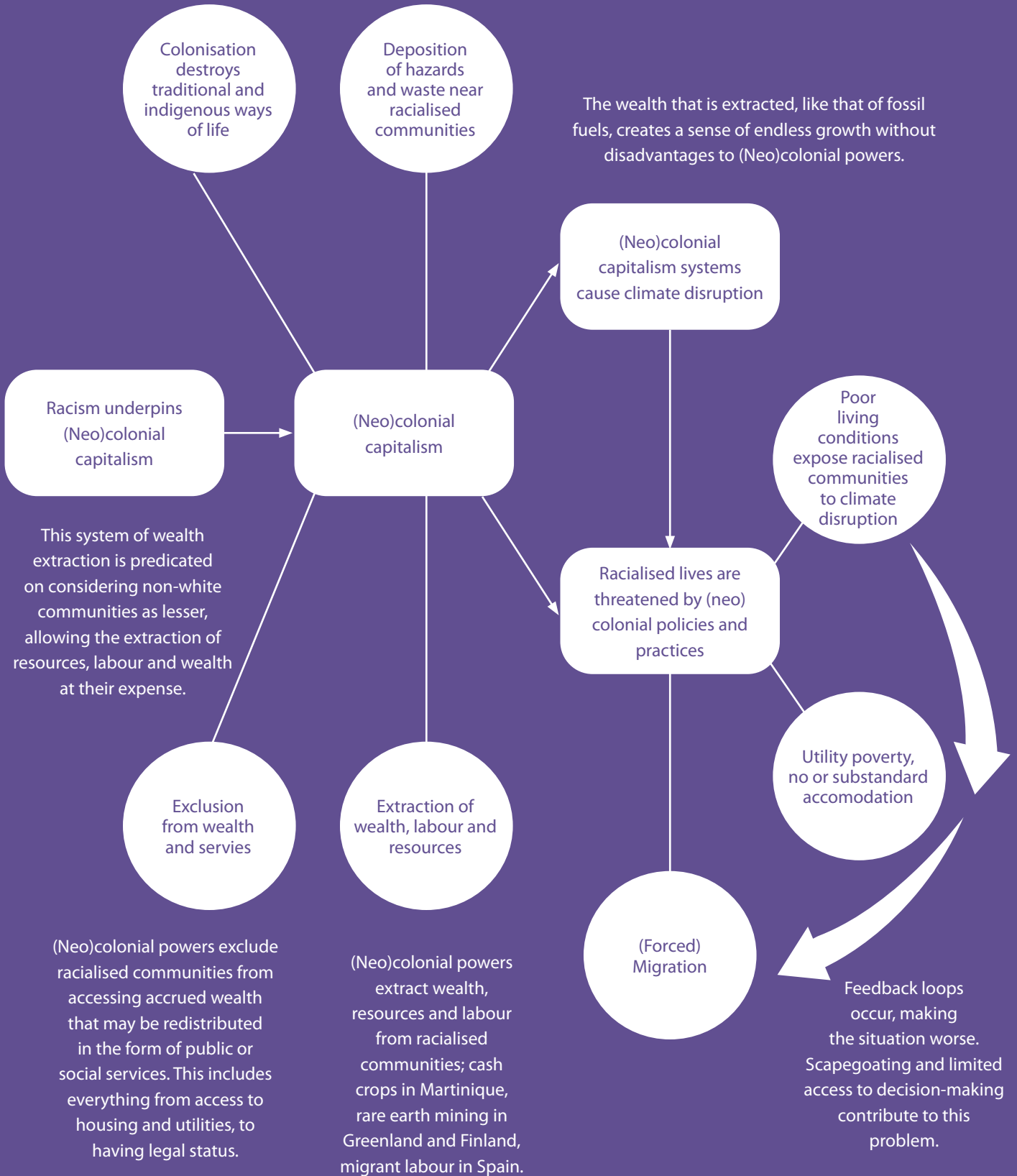
8 Kiran Asher and Priti Ramamurthy, "Rethinking Decolonial and Postcolonial Knowledges beyond Regions to Imagine Transnational Solidarity," *Hypatia* 35.3 (2020): 542-547. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2020.16>



(Neo)colonial powers destroy the infrastructure, ways of life and ancestral knowledge of racialised and in particular, indigenous communities, who often live off of the land.

These lives are deemed lesser and expendable

The wealth that is extracted, like that of fossil fuels, creates a sense of endless growth without disadvantages to (Neo)colonial powers.



# Section 2: Terminology



Language is central to understanding and also to changing larger abstract concepts and systems such as (neo)colonial capitalism and climate-related racism. We have been deliberate in using certain terms, and we want this report to be accessible to readers and for you to make informed decisions about the terms you choose to use to frame and form the discussions and issues. All the terminology in this report reflects the European Network Against Racism's official positions. Here are some definitions and considerations.

### Climate crisis; Climate breakdown; Climate disruption vs Climate change

We use various terms in this report; climate crisis, climate disruption, climate breakdown - but rarely, climate change. This term is too neutral and does not encapsulate the gravity, urgency and systemic nature of the situation. This shift in usage is a development in recent years in the climate movement and progressive news outlets. As an additional clarification, the climate crisis is broader than climate breakdown and disruption, encapsulating economic, social and other effects.

### Racialised communities vs Communities of colour

We use the term racialised communities instead of commonly used alternatives such as communities of colour or Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC) to denote that racialisation is something that is done to communities by others and given meaning in this way, instead of being an inherent characteristic such as black and brown skin tones. Furthermore, the term 'racialised communities' is inclusive of groups such as Travellers who may not be considered 'people of colour', but certainly experience racism, and are therefore racialised. **The process of racialisation entails ascribing sets of characteristics viewed as inherent to members of a group because of their physical or cultural traits. These are not limited to skin tone or pigmentation, but include a myriad of attributes including cultural traits such as language,**

clothing, and religious practices. The characteristics thus emerge as 'racial' as an outcome of the process.<sup>9</sup>

### Decolonising: Decolonial, Postcolonial, Anticolonial

We use the term decolonising to mean the process of undoing the process of (neo)colonialism, and shifting to policies, practices and ways of life that not only support racial equity but other forms of social and financial equity, instead of wealth extraction. This term was chosen as opposed to other terms such as decolonial, postcolonial and anticolonial, which all have specific scholarly and regional histories.<sup>10,11</sup> Our aim is to make this report as accessible to activists, political and lay audiences, and we have therefore chosen not to dive deeply into this debate. Nevertheless, the word decolonising is central to signalling a shift away from colonial capitalism, and the form 'decolonising' signals an ongoing process in which actors are continually learning.

### Climate racism; Environmental Racism

Environmental racism refers to the policies and practices that result in the disproportionate exposure of racialised communities to pollution, and other environmental hazards. This includes the restriction of participation of racialised communities in decision-making<sup>12</sup> processes around environmental issues that impact them. Climate racism refers to similar policies and practices, as well as exclusion from decision-making.<sup>13</sup>

9 Steve Garner and Saher Selod, 'The Racialisation of Muslims: Empirical Studies in Islamophobia' (2014) 12. See [here](#).

10 Daniel J. Elam, 'Anticolonialism,' *Global South Studies*. See [here](#).

11 Kiran Asher and Priti Ramamurthy, 'Rethinking Decolonial and Postcolonial Knowledges beyond Regions to Imagine Transnational Solidarity,' *Hypatia* 35.3 (2020): 542-547. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2020.16>

12 Based on definition in Bullard, Robert D. 'The Threat of Environmental Racism.' *Natural Resources & Environment*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1993, pp. 23-56. See [here](#).

13 Carmen Gonzalez, 'Racial Capitalism, Climate Justice and Climate Displacement,' *Onati Socio-legal Series* 11.1 (2021):108-147 <https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.iisl/0000-0000-0000-1137>

## (Neo)colonialism; (neo)Colonial Capitalism; Colonising Powers

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**(Neo)colonial capitalism is the ideology and practice of maximising profits and wealth for a few atop a racial hierarchy, by extracting this wealth from the land, labour and resources of others. If there is no wealth to extract, communities often undergo forced assimilation, or are completely excluded from the accrued wealth and related services.** Racism and white supremacy underpin this ideology and practice, as they support the dispossession and subjugation of these other communities. Colonising powers are those that conduct this wealth extraction and related practices – these could be states or corporations, for example. **We use (neo) here to demonstrate that despite formerly colonised nations gaining their independence, global colonial dynamics persist through the Military-industrial complex, Euro-American foreign policy, and capitalism as an economic, socio-cultural and political system.**

## Extractivism

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**Extractivism is the phenomenon and mechanism of removing large amounts of natural resources from a particular area, often for export and profit.<sup>14</sup> Extractivism fits right into the mould of (neo)colonial capitalism; it is the mechanism by which wealth is elicited and moved to largely white, wealthy areas.** Climate disruption is the consequence of one wave of extractivism – that of fossil fuels, forests and the like. Subsequently, in the current response to climate disruption, other forms of extractivism have cropped up.

## Intersectionality

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**Intersectionality looks at the ways in which various social categories such as gender, class, race, sexuality, disability, religion and other identity axes are interwoven on multiple and simultaneous levels. The discrimination resulting from these mutually reinforcing identities leads to systemic injustice and social**

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14 Alberto Acosta, "Extractivism and neoextractivism: two sides of the same curse," *Beyond development: alternative visions from Latin America* 1 (2013): 61-86. See [here](#).

**inequality.** The concept of intersectionality is grounded in decades of activism that battled the challenges of racism and sexism throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup> This report concludes that climate and environmental racism are specific examples of structural racism. **We use the framework of intersectionality to understand how different racialised communities are specifically and disproportionately impacted by climate injustice, and to discuss targeted solutions.**

## Environmental Migrant; Environmentally Displaced Person

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According to the International Organisation for Migration, Environmental Migrants are "...persons or groups of persons who, **predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment that adversely affects their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes,** or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad".<sup>16</sup> While Environmentally Displaced People are "[P]ersons who are displaced within their country of habitual residence or who have crossed an international border and for whom environmental degradation, deterioration or destruction is a major cause of their displacement, although not necessarily the sole one. This term is used as a less controversial alternative to environmental refugee or climate refugee [in the case of those displaced across an international border] that have no legal basis or *raison d'être* in international law, to refer to a category of environmental migrants whose movement is of a clearly forced nature".<sup>17</sup>

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15 Miriam Aced, Aida Bekele, Emilia Z. Roig, Henrike Scholz. Intersectional discrimination in Europe: relevance, challenges and ways forward. Brussels, Belgium: European Network Against Racism, 2019. Accessed 8 June 2021. See [here](#).

16 International Organisation for Migration (2011) *Environmental Migration Portal-Environmental Migration*. See [here](#).

17 International Organisation for Migration (2011) *Environmental Migration Portal-Environmental Migration*. See [here](#).

# Enar's Principles, Actions And Demands For Achieving Climate Justice

One of our ENAR's primary aims with this report is to platform and amplify the testimonies shared with us by racialised communities in Europe who are already suffering the consequences of the (neo)colonial capitalist climate crisis. However, due to the nature of this report and the funding structures that have made this work possible, we will also offer some policy recommendations.

Please note, we do not outline the following recommendations without acknowledging the systematic reluctance of the institutions hoarding the power to effect meaningful change, to improve the quality of life for racialised communities now and for generations to come. In order for these recommendations to rectify historical injustices and to achieve equity and liberation for racialised communities, they must necessarily be paired with strong political will.

Political will to decolonise, to hold corporations to account, to protect vulnerable communities, divestment from the border-industrial complex, to provide reparations and climate debt, and to ensure that everyone has access to a safe and healthy environment to live.

DECOLONISING OUR POLITICAL ECONOMY	
Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our political and economic thought must shift away from that of extractivist, (neo)colonial capitalist focus on sustainable development, towards democratic, decolonised and equitable economies.</b> We want a political and economic model that centres equity, accountability and care towards each other, 0 and in relation to the environment, in order to achieve climate and racial justice and liberation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support and stimulate local democratic economies and community wealth-building among racialised communities in Europe.</b> Various communities would benefit from strong, local economies, giving them decision-making power and sovereignty back over their livelihoods. Such economies are more resilient to (neo) colonial extractivist activities by outside states and corporations.</li> <li>• <b>Support social and green entrepreneurship by racialised communities.</b> Supply them with skills and funding so that they can gain access to this new economy.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The development of local food systems is an important part of climate and environmental justice.</b> Lack of access to healthy food or the denial of the ability to grow it due to corporate capture of land is also part of (neo)colonial capitalism.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support local communities in developing their own local food solutions, through local farms, markets, food co-operatives etc.</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Land must be de-commodified as it is a common resource.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support the de-commodification of housing and utilities. This will help it become accessible to all.</b></li> </ul>

## CENTRING JUSTICE FOR RACIALISED COMMUNITIES

Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>(Neo)colonial capitalism plays a central role in the climate crisis</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call for reparations for historical wrongs, including slavery, wealth extraction and occupation etc.</b> Full reparations include cessation, restitution and repatriation, compensation, satisfaction and rehabilitation, for all racialised communities across the world.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environmental and climate racisms are specific examples of structural racism that are driven by (neo)colonial capitalism.</b> Naming these concepts and defining them gives them power and helps identify specific actions that can be taken to combat them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Call for environmental and climate reparations for all racialised communities.</b> These are reparations for climate-related ills, both in global North and Global South countries. Instead of using the frame of 'aid' extended in times of crisis, the frame of climate debt should be used, paid out even if there is no immediate humanitarian emergency at hand.</li> <li>• <b>Call for racial mainstreaming in all policy packages and deals aimed at tackling the climate crisis.</b> Racialised communities in Europe are already suffering the impacts of the climate crisis disproportionately. All tools and instruments to combat the climate crisis should explicitly account for Europe's racialised communities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Indigenous communities deserve attention as racialised, oppressed communities. Indigenous communities in Europe do not get much attention from European anti-racist organisations, but they should absolutely be included given the framework of (neo) colonial capitalism that undergirds the climate crisis and the oppression of Indigenous communities.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Include Indigenous communities in anti-racist networks and organising in Europe.</b> Stand in solidarity with Indigenous struggle.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The racist right-wing co-optation of the climate crisis is dangerous to true climate justice for racialised communities.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denounce and call out racist right-wing co-optation of climate narratives.</b> Climate narratives to justify racist, anti-migration and eco-fascist agendas should be explicitly denounced by politicians, scientists, policy makers, legislators, civil society organisations and activists.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The right to say no (to industrial, extractive projects etc.) is an essential part of a just and equitable society.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support racialised and other marginalised communities in stopping (neo)colonial capitalist projects and industries that impact them.</b></li> <li>• <b>Support informed prior consent and land rights for Indigenous people and other racialised communities.</b></li> </ul>

## DECOLONISING CLIMATE SCIENCE

Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Our scientific thought must shift away from its white, colonial roots towards accessible, anti-racist scientific thought.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocate for traditional ecological knowledge to be valued alongside modern science.</b> Oftentimes Indigenous and ancestral knowledge is relegated to mysticism and rejected as unreliable, while this knowledge has allowed these communities to live in harmony with the land for centuries.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A shift from saviourship towards stewardship is essential, within and beyond the climate movement.</b> Saviourship is embedded in the mainstream climate movement as shown by the common refrains of ‘saving the planet’ or ‘saving the climate’. This conquest-oriented and colonial mentality must be abandoned and replaced with stewardship of our environment, and solidarity with racialised communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support re-wilding efforts led by Indigenous communities and other communities that have traditional knowledge of the land.</b></li> </ul>

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>International solidarity is central in tackling this global crisis, in which Europe has been a perpetrator, and racialised communities worldwide are suffering disproportionately.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Support organisations in the Global South and lift up their voices.</b> We must not to forget countries such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Kiribati, which are on the frontlines of climate breakdown.</li> <li>• <b>Push for documentation for migrant workers in Europe.</b> In the European Union, the labour of many migrants is exploited for citizens’ gain, exposing them to climate disruption, while they are not able to obtain regularisation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The relationship between war, militarism, migration and environmental/climate destruction must receive renewed attention.</b> Creating awareness about these relationships, in anti-racist, migrant rights and climate justice movements, can lead to more collaboration and a stronger platform for decolonising, anti-racist climate action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Push for climate disruption to be used as grounds for accepting refugees.</b> Demand legislation broadening the definition of the refugee to include climate-related grounds and utilise existing legislation to facilitate asylum for these refugees.</li> <li>• <b>Forge ties with anti-militarism, migrant and refugee rights, anti-nuclear movements.</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Borders are a colonial imposition, as are colonial ties. Solidarity must be shown across them, to break them down.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collaborate with racialised communities in ‘formerly colonised regions’, to raise their voices up.</b> The collaboration between le CRAN and various Martinican and Guadeloupian organisations is an example.</li> <li>• <b>Support collaborations across colonial borders.</b> Indigenous lands usually transcend imposed borders, and collaboration across them helps break down these borders.</li> <li>• <b>Join forces across racialised communities to raise awareness about the issues.</b> Encourage various anti-racist communities to work together on decolonising climate justice and developing climate justice plans. Together, we can overcome.</li> </ul>

## MAINSTREAMING DECOLONISING, ANTI-RACIST APPROACHES

Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We must mainstream decolonising approaches in European institutions and policy packages.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Push for the European Green Deal and any national deals/just transition packages to include racialised communities explicitly.</b> For example: Green jobs should be made accessible for racialised communities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Housing, sanitation and utilities are fundamental rights.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Demand that housing, sanitation and utilities for ALL are included in any anti-racist or decolonising climate policy, including the European Green Deal and any other Just Transition packages.</b></li> <li>• <b>Demand that housing, sanitation and utilities for ALL are included in community-specific policy packages.</b> For example, these should be included in the EU Action Plan Against Racism 2020-2025, National Action Plans Against Racism and other frameworks, including Roma post-2020 strategic framework.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nothing about us without us; representation and participation are important.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No more climate talks in Europe (whether for the EGD or other deals/packages) without adequate representation from racialised communities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Support representation for racialised communities in politics at every level.</b> These communities are still terribly underrepresented at every level.</li> </ul>

## ANTI-RACIST ORGANISING

Principles	Actions and demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Racialised voices and modes of work are less visible and deserve to be lifted up in the European climate movement.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Build our own spaces and empower ourselves to take action.</b> We need to have spaces where we feel comfortable organising for decolonising, anti-racist climate justice. We need to have the resources and information to do this.</li> <li>• <b>Host action trainings and spaces for only racialised or marginalised communities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Consider organising trainings for largely white climate organisations looking to take justice-based and decolonising approaches.</b> This may help mainstream decolonising approaches, but be careful not to drain the racialised organisers' energy on dealing with racism within these organisations. It is an option, not a responsibility.</li> </ul>



# Section 3: Indigenous Communities

In The Face Of Climate Disruption  
And 'Green' Extractivist Projects



**The realities and experiences of Indigenous communities worldwide are often erased from history and collective memories. The Arctic is one of the fastest-heating places on earth, and the Sámi and Inuit people living in or near the Arctic region are exposed to the risks and consequences of that. Arctic heating is almost twice as fast as the global average,<sup>18</sup> and there the consequences of this climate disruption are visible and dire. Added to this are the serious consequences of mining in the region for rare earth elements, a major resource required for Euro-America's increasingly tech-driven 'green' economy. Indigenous communities worldwide and in the Arctic region are therefore already facing the harsh realities of climate disruption.**

Reporting on the Arctic and climate change often treats the Arctic as a pristine landscape untouched by people: a *terra nullius* of sorts. This problematic narrative actively undermines the fact that the Arctic region is Indigenous land and perpetuates the notion that the Arctic landscape is free to be appropriated and exploited by the highest bidder. We hear about ice sheet and permafrost melt, and the newly exposed rare earth metals that various mining corporations and nation-states are salivating over. Indigenous communities are often effaced from this reality. These narratives are rooted in centuries of (neo)colonial practices that aimed to efface Indigenous cultures and realities – in Europe, this is certainly true of the Sámi.<sup>19</sup> Such erasure legitimises the extraction of resources from these regions, and renders invisible the profound impacts of climate disruption on Sámi and Inuit peoples.

(Neo)colonial practices and dynamics endure. According to statistics published in the Carbon Majors, a 2017 report published by the Carbon Disclosure Project, only 100 energy companies have been responsible for 71% of all industrial emissions.<sup>20</sup> So, while Indigenous communities worldwide have not contributed much, if anything, towards climate disruption, they suffer the consequences

of rising emissions, loss of wildlife and nature first.<sup>21</sup> This loss of nature and wildlife, as well as the corruption of the climate, can be seen as a result of (neo)colonialism; the subjugation, exploitation and sacrifice of not only people, but also of nature. To compound this destruction, the state and corporations engage in (neo)colonial practices, taking control of Indigenous land for windfarms, and rare metal and uranium mining. These projects are often billed as 'green', supporting the new 'green' economy, but follow the extractive, exploitative model that (neo)colonial capitalism has laid down. Such projects are known as extractivist projects, ones that remove large amounts of natural resources, in particular for capital gain and export.<sup>22</sup>



18 Environmental Justice Foundation, *Rights At Risk: Arctic Climate Change and the Threat to Sami Culture*. (6 February 2019). See [here](#).

19 John Weinstock, "Assimilation of the Sámi: Its Unforeseen Effects on the Majority Populations of Scandinavia," *Scandinavian Studies* 85.4 (2013): 411-430. <https://doi.org/10.5406/scanstud.85.4.0411>

20 Paul Griffin. The Carbon Majors Database CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017. London, United Kingdom: Carbon Disclosure Project, 2017. See [here](#).

21 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Indigenous Peoples, "Climate Change." See [here](#).

22 Alberto Acosta, "Extractivism and neoextractivism: two sides of the same curse," *Beyond development: alternative visions from Latin America* 1 (2013): 61-86. See [here](#).

# Sámi And Inuit Struggles Against Climate Disruption And Green Extractivism

This section will engage with Sámi and Inuit struggles against climate disruption and such 'green' extractivist, industrial projects, and how (neo)colonial capitalism is at the root of these troubles.

The Sámi are an Indigenous people whose homelands, known as Sápmi, span northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, extending into the Arctic regions of these countries. Scandinavian kingdoms slowly encroached on Sámi territories over the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as industrialisation occurred, a clearly colonial endeavour.<sup>23</sup> Forced language and religious assimilation followed, as well as the imposition of state borders within Sápmi.<sup>24,25</sup> The Sámi historically live off the land, herding reindeer and fishing, although this is changing as more Sámi engage with the market economy.

## Climate disruption and Sámi livelihoods

Climate disruption has been an important force in this change. In Sápmi, the warming weather has meant that in winter, more rain falls than snow, freezing on the ground. Reindeer food sources such as lichens are trapped under this layer, where reindeer cannot get to them.<sup>26</sup> So, herders have to feed their reindeer more than before, which is an expensive and labour-intensive endeavour, according to a vice-President of the Saami Council, Skuvllaalbmá Áslat Niillas Áslat, who also goes by the name of Áslat Holmberg. Not all herders can or want to take this on. Holmberg recounts that the animals also have trouble adjusting to increasingly variable weather patterns, like the excessive snowfall of last winter, which buried food. Many reindeer died in districts where extra feeding was not practiced.

These changes are not recent, nor future prospects, as many in the climate movement in Europe would have us believe. The consequences of climate breakdown loom large for the Sámi, with many suffering from mental

health problems.<sup>27</sup> The loss they suffer is not only one of their traditional livelihoods, but their ways of life. This is not only the case for Sámi, but also other communities who live off of the land and waters, despite not having Indigenous status.

This is not the first time that the Sámi ways of life have been denied or systematically destroyed. The history of (neo) colonialism is country-specific, but **certain Scandinavian countries have historically enforced cultural assimilation, including a prohibition on speaking Sámi languages and singing traditional music.**<sup>28</sup> In Norway, Sámi children were sent to re-education boarding schools where they learned Norwegian, and the norms of the Norwegian population.<sup>29</sup> There are clear parallels with settler colonialism as it occurred in what is now known as the United States. This process is continued by climate disruption.

## Extractivist, (neo)colonial projects

To make things worse, in recent years there has been a growing interest from large corporations in the natural resources on Sámi lands, in the name of 'green' industry and economy. For example, the windfarms built on hundreds of kilometres of Sámi land, taking up significant sections of reindeer grazing land, have serious implications for Sámi livelihoods and ways of life. Another key example is the extractivist practice of mining for rare earth metals, which are a central part of the current technologies developed to support emissions-reduction, from storage and energy transfer<sup>30,31,32</sup> Sápmi is rich in these metals, and has mountainous regions well-suited to wind-turbines. Nornickel is a company that owns the nickel mine on Russian Sámi land, and also has mines in other Indigenous

23 "The Colonization of Sápmi," *Samer*. See [here](#).

24 The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Sami," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (January 9 2020). See [here](#).

25 "In God's Service," *Samer*. See [here](#).

26 Environmental Justice Foundation, *Rights At Risk: Arctic Climate Change and the Threat to Sami Culture*. (6 February 2019). See [here](#).

27 Emilie Kowalczewski and Joern Klein, "Sámi youth health, the role of climate change, and unique health-seeking behaviour," *International journal of circumpolar health* 77.1 (2018): 1454785. <https://doi.org/10.1080/22423982.2018.1454785>

28 Kraft, Siv Ellen. "Shamanism and Indigenous Soundscapes: The Case of Mari Boine." *Nordic neoshamanisms*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2015. 235-262. See [here](#).

29 Jonas Jakobsen, "Education, Recognition and the Sami people of Norway." *Writing Postcolonial Histories of Intercultural Education*, Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang Publishing (2011). See [here](#).

30 Niall Smith, "Nickel: A green energy necessity with grave environmental risks," *Verisk Maplecroft*, (29 July 2018). See [here](#).

31 Editor, "Global wind turbine fleet to consume over 5.5Mt of copper by 2028 – report," *Mining.com* (2 September 2019). See [here](#).

32 Jocelyn Timperley, "Explainer: These six metals are key to a low-carbon future," *CarbonBrief*, (12 April 2018). See [here](#).

communities' land in Russia. In 2020, Nornickel had a large fuel spill around Lake Pyasino in Russia, with devastating consequences for Indigenous peoples.<sup>33</sup>

Another such example is the Nordic Railways Corporation Forum's development of the Arctic Railway<sup>34</sup>, which will lead to even more industrial activity on Sámi lands. The railway, roughly 500km long, would connect Roavvenjárga (Rovaniemi) in Finnish Sápmi to Girkonjárga (Kirkenes) in Norwegian Sápmi. Billed as an environmentally friendly mode of transport, it would facilitate the rapid transport of minerals and logs extracted from Sápmi, allowing such extractive industry to grow more quickly<sup>35</sup>.

"The line will cut through 6 Sámi herding-districts, fragmenting them into smaller parcels, and creating far more traffic in quiet areas. This railway will further disrupt reindeer herding, as many herding districts are on the proposed line of the railway. Many people say they can't continue herding if the railway is built."  
*Áslat Holmberg, a Vice-President of Saami Council*

These are but a handful examples of the extractivist projects that harbour great consequences for the health, livelihoods and cultures of the Sámi people, and the 'green' methods used in the name of 'sustainability' to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions are being deployed at the expense of racialised communities.<sup>36</sup>

33 Jake Cordell, "Arctic Oil Spill: Nornickel Failures, Tank Flaws Caused Catastrophe- Report," *The Moscow Times*, (26 November 2020). See [here](#).

34 Arctic Corridor, *Arctic Railway: Rovaniemi-Kirkenes*. See [here](#). [brochure]

35 Tom Wall, "The battle to save Lapland: 'First, they took the religion. Now they want to build a railroad,'" *The Guardian*, (23 February 2019). See [here](#).

36 Naomi Klein. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the Climate*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. See [here](#).

"A lot of these projects are being painted as 'green'. Not all that is 'green' can be accepted if it's harmful for the Sámi. So it always comes down to the right to self-determination, to the right to live your own culture, because that's inextricably linked to the lands and to waters and the territories."  
*Áslat Holmberg, a Vice-President of the Saami Council*

Climate disruption is the consequence of one wave of (neo) colonial extractivism – that of fossil fuels, forests and the like. Subsequently, to battle climate disruption, another (neo)colonial wave of extractivism is taking place; that for rare earth metals. Even windfarms could be construed as extractivist due to the way they are currently set up, with no regard for local, Indigenous communities and every regard for the capital that is generated for a wealthy few. Clearly, the real problem is in fact (neo)colonial capitalism, and not simply emissions.

### Uranium and Rare Earth Element Mining in Kuannersuit and Inuit Livelihoods

The Inuit are another Indigenous people that inhabit the Arctic, spanning Greenland, Siberian Russia, Alaska and Canada. In this report, we focus on the Greenlandic people, the vast majority of whom have Inuit roots, as it is an Overseas Territory or County of the European Union, and since 1721 has faced an enduring colonial dynamic with Denmark. The majority of Greenlandic people live off of the land to varying degrees, whether that means sheep-farming, fishing, herding or hunting. Inuit across the Arctic are impacted heavily by climate disruption and extractivism, as evidenced by the fires in Siberia during the summer of 2020.<sup>37</sup>

37 Justin Rowlett "Climate change: Siberian heatwave 'clear evidence' of warming," *BBC News*, (15 July 2020). See [here](#).

Kuannersuit is a mountain just six kilometres from Narsaq in Southern Greenland, rich in uranium and earth elements. The state of Denmark mined Kuannersuit for uranium from 1958 to 1981, but then imposed a moratorium on uranium-mining in 1988. This moratorium was overturned in 2013 by the Greenlandic self-government.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime the Australian company 'Greenland Minerals' positioned itself to re-open the mine, having taken over the Kuannersuit project in 2007. Australia is 14,836 kilometers from Greenland, and the sheer distance between the deploying company and the land and lives its project acts upon is a remnant of past colonial dynamics.

The self-government was interested in economic benefits that mining might bring to Greenland, and posed the argument that these economic benefits might help Greenland gain sovereignty from Denmark. As mentioned here, Greenland is increasingly reliant on Denmark for trade and import of goods, including food that cannot be grown or hunted locally. This is of course in part due to the legacy of (neo)colonialism.

"Narsaq will die if a mine like Kuannersuit opens. That says many things, and it is so sad for me just saying it"

*Mariane Paviasen, Greenlandic MP and activist against Kuannersuit*

Contrary to the government's line, Mariane Paviasen, a Narsaq local who started Urani Naamik (*Say No to Uranium*), an organisation that is fighting the mine, says that the mine would be devastating for the local community and economy. The town's economy is based on agriculture and food; all of the sheep farms in Greenland are concentrated in the south, and Narsaq has the only slaughterhouse in Greenland, as well as two fish-processing factories. Paviasen and other town inhabitants are

worried about the pollution, radioactive and otherwise, from the mine. The tailings deposit, where the mine's waste material is dumped, is planned a mere 4km away from Narsaq's main water source, according to Paviasen.

Pollution from the mine would also contaminate local waters and lands, used for fishing and hunting.



A mine at Kuannersuit would also contaminate the sheep farms with radioactive material, according to Aviåja Lennert, a sheepfarmer from near Narsaq. Lennert and others would have to move their farms and families due to the health impacts and effects on the sheep, and the sheep meat they sell. Lennert's farm, like many others, is a family business passed on through generations. The health, livelihoods and cultures of local Inuit communities are at risk, as the area is sacrificed for corporate profits. The government has continually downplayed any negative health and environmental impacts of the mine, according to Lennert.

Just as on Sámi lands, the extractive activities that might take place here are to supply the so-called 'green' energy industry and 'green' tech economy. However, as previously mentioned, both the processes that caused climate disruption and the current wave of uranium and rare earth metal extraction are driven by (neo)colonial capitalism. The lives, interests and futures of Indigenous communities are not considered, serving as yet another example of the reality that racialised communities face worldwide: their lives come after profit.

<sup>38</sup> "Greenland votes to allow uranium, rare earths mining," *EURACTIVE*, (25 October 2013). See [here](#).

## Community Mobilisation

"It is far too easy for companies to make initial reservations on Sámi land. So it is quite hard to trust the authorities to protect the Sámi culture. In Finland, the only thing you need for making a mining reservation is to have a company that could establish a mine."

*Áslat Holmberg, a Vice-President of Saami Council*

**Sámi people in the area of Eanodat (Enontekiö), Finland, found out that a company had made a reservation for a mine on their grazing lands through the newspaper.<sup>39</sup> Although the updated Mining Act (2011) does require that there be no 'negative impacts' to Sámi culture, there is no informed, prior consent required in the licensing process.<sup>40</sup>**

While there are limited legal protections for their land rights, the Sámi do have their own political institutions, including Sámi parliaments in each of the four states in Sápmi. The Saami Council, a separate body, aims to advocate for Sámi rights as one nation, across state borders. The Council has worked to connect with various international and UN bodies, including the UNFCCC, the UN biodiversity convention, the committee on the elimination of racial discrimination and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues. Nevertheless, Holmberg says it's a challenge to get all the 180 countries involved to commit to strong, binding agreements that protect Sámi rights. In terms of representation in non-Sámi parliaments and

governance, Sámi representation tends to be best at the local or regional level.<sup>41</sup>

The Sámi have mounted a number of campaigns against extractivist projects, largely targeting companies directly, given the apathy of the authorities. In addition to the ongoing campaign against the reservation in Enontekiö, the #AnswerUsElonMusk campaign targets Tesla and other companies that buy nickel from Nornickel. Sámi communities have also pursued litigation to secure their traditional land rights, often with the support of the Council, with mixed results. The court ruled against the Sámi community of Jillen-Njaarke, in a lawsuit against a company which had already started building windfarms on their land without the necessary permits. Not only did the ruling not go in their favour, but they were also left to pay court fees totalling 2 million Norwegian kroner. The Sámi people of Girjás in Sweden did succeed in securing hunting and fishing rights for their people. This was the first case to bestow land rights to Sámi based on historical precedent.<sup>42</sup>

In Kuannersuit, there has been lively opposition from the local communities, as the companies involved edged closer and closer to opening a uranium mine. The organisation Urani Naamik<sup>43</sup>, set up by Paviasen to fight the opening of the mine, has slowly gathered and translated information on both the mine's opening and the dangers of rare earth element mining into Greenland. They also continue to organise demonstrations, hold the parliament accountable and push the government to reconsider. Additionally, Lennert got a majority of the sheep farmers in the sheep farming association in southern Greenland to sign a petition against the opening of the mine, but the government paid little attention. Paviasen and Lennert both agreed that the local government does not seem to care about the negative impacts of the mine. In 2020, Paviasen entered the Inatsisartut, the Greenlandic Parliament, to advocate for her community's rights from within, repeating that the environmental-impact assessments done on

39 Christina Henriksen, "Finland violates the rights of the Sámi people by allowing mining companies in Sámi homeland," Saami Council, (2 June 2020). See [here](#).

40 Timo Koivura and Anna Petréti. "Enacting a New Mining Act in Finland - How Were Sámi Rights and Interests Taken into Account?" *Nordic Journal of Environmental Law* 1 (2015): 119-133. See [here](#).

41 Eva Josefson, "The Saami and the National Parliaments: Channels for Political Influence," *Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme*, (2010). See [here](#).

42 Richard Orange, "Indigenous reindeer herders win hunting rights battle in Sweden," *the Guardian*, (23 January 2020). See [here](#).

43 See <https://www.uraninaamik.com>

the mine are inadequate. The government has historically left it to Greenland Minerals and other companies with a vested financial interest in opening the mines, to conduct the assessments.

In response to the community mobilisation against the mines, in July 2021 the elected government initiated a month-long consultation process to understand public opinion on the mine to research for a proposed bill to

prohibit mining for uranium, and to additional studies and activities that a company must undertake before applying for a mining licence.<sup>44</sup> In November 2021, Greenland's parliament voted to ban uranium mining, likely halting the Australian company 'Greenland Minerals' rare earths mines project.<sup>45</sup> This decision is a victory for Indigenous communities in the region who had been campaigning for this for years.



44 Kevin McGiwan, "Greenland government ready to outlaw uranium mining," *Arctic Today*, (15 July 2021). See [here](#).

45 Kevin McGiwan, "Greenland restores uranium ban- likely halting a controversial rare earths mine," *Arctic Today*, (10 November 2021). See [here](#).

# Section 4: French Colonial Legacies

From Chlordecone  
To Nitrogen Dioxide

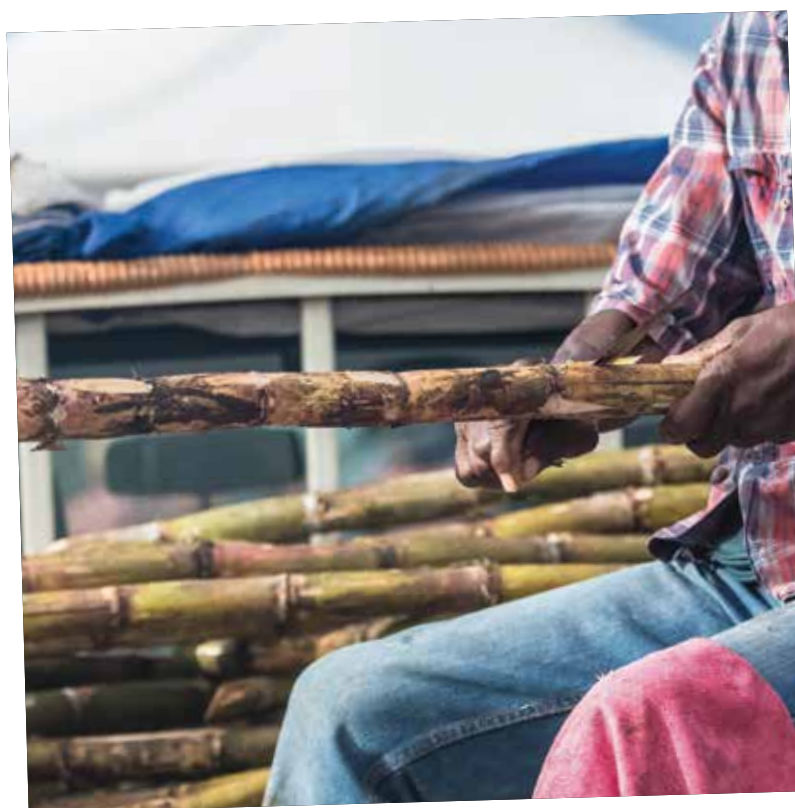




**Both on the European continent and in Europe's existing (neo)colonial territories, racialised communities are disproportionately impacted by pollution, where harmful materials are introduced into the environment and can negatively impact the quality of water, air and land.<sup>46</sup> Such pollution is often worsened by climate disruption.**

**In France, communities in the French Antilles islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe are being exposed to a toxic pesticide named chlordecone, which was used on plantations to grow cash crops until the mid 1990s, despite being outlawed in the United States and in metropolitan France.<sup>47</sup>**

In modern day metropolitan France, it is becoming clearer that air pollution is disproportionately impacting racialised communities, due to their proximity to incinerators and large roadways. These racialised communities are often the descendants of people from former colonies of France and people with other migrant backgrounds. The impacts of such pollution are not an accident of location, but a result of racist state policies that do not value the health and lives of racialised communities. The negative impacts of such pollution are contributing to a climate crisis which is targeting racialised people above all. This section deals with such dynamics in Guadeloupe and Martinique, as well as in metropolitan France.



46 Diane Boudreau, Melissa McDaniel, Erin Sprout, Andrew Turgeon, 'Pollution' (18 August 2011). See [here](#).

47 Tim Whewell "The Caribbean islands poisoned by a carcinogenic pesticide," *BBC News, Martinique*, (20 November 2020). See [here](#).

# Chlordecone in Guadeloupe and Martinique

Martinique and Guadeloupe are islands in the French Antilles, colonised by France in the 17th century, and remain French overseas territories today.<sup>48</sup> The Indigenous communities on these islands were largely killed by French forces,<sup>49,50</sup> who then brought Africans they had enslaved to labour on banana, tobacco and sugarcane plantations on the islands.<sup>51</sup> Slavery was finally abolished on the islands in 1848 and replaced by other racist policies that were implemented to serve the exploitative labour industries.<sup>52,53,54</sup>

## Poisonous pesticide on plantations

Chlordecone is a neurotoxic carcinogen that bioaccumulates. This means that it stays in soils as well as in organisms for decades after exposure, if not longer, and is toxic to nerves and causes cancer.<sup>55</sup> There is evidence that chlordecone exposure contributes to premature births, and can impact infants' development in terms of memory and motor skills.<sup>56</sup> The pesticide was first used under the brand name Kepone in the United States, and was quickly outlawed once its dangerous health impacts were clear in 1975.<sup>57</sup> Despite this, Jacques Chirac - the French Minister for Agriculture at the time, and former-president - authorised chlordecone's use in Martinique and Guadeloupe between 1973 and 1993 on banana plantations to combat banana root borers.<sup>58</sup>

Chlordecone was outlawed in metropolitan France in 1990, but plantation-owners in Martinique and Guadeloupe were granted a 3-year extension for its use by the French government, despite evidence that it was having terrible health impacts on the French citizens of the islands, most of whom are descendants of enslaved people, as well as the local ecology and economy.<sup>59</sup> Chlordecone has been detected in more than 90% of the populations of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and the consequences are still unfolding.<sup>60</sup> The incidence of prostate cancer in Martinique and Guadeloupe is far higher than world averages and is linked to chlordecone.<sup>61,62</sup> Chlordecone has also contaminated the soil and water, meaning that many local sources of food crops are contaminated.<sup>63</sup>



The plantations found on these islands today are a (neo) colonial legacy; they continue to be owned by *békés*, the descendents of white slave-owners. For example, the largest plantation in Guadeloupe, Bois-Debout, is owned by the *béké* family Dormoy.<sup>64</sup> Critically, the crops grown on these plantations are cash crops; more than 90% are

48 Guy Numa, "Colonial heritages and continuities in Guadeloupe and Martinique: An economic perspective." *Euro-Caribbean Societies in the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2018): 115-127. See [here](#).

49 Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Martinique*, 2007. See [here](#).

50 Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Guadeloupe*, 2007. See [here](#).

51 Guy Numa, "Colonial heritages and continuities in Guadeloupe and Martinique: An economic perspective." *Euro-Caribbean Societies in the 21st Century* (Routledge, 2018): 115-127. See [here](#).

52 Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Martinique*, 2007. See [here](#).

53 Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Guadeloupe*, 2007. See [here](#).

54 Luc Multigner, et al, "Chlordecone exposure and adverse effects in French West Indies populations," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 23.1 (2016): 3-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-015-4621-5>

55 Chaussonnerie, Sébastien, et al, "Microbial degradation of a recalcitrant pesticide: chlordecone," *Frontiers in microbiology* 7 (2016): 2025.

56 Luc Multigner, et al, "Chlordecone exposure and adverse effects in French West Indies populations," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 23.1 (2016): 3-8.

57 Shanklin B. Cannon et al, "Epidemic kepone poisoning in chemical workers," *American journal of epidemiology* 107.6 (1978): 529-537. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a112572>

58 Luc Multigner, et al, "Chlordecone exposure and adverse effects in French West Indies populations," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 23.1 (2016): 3-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-015-4621-5>

59 Cécile Baquey, "Le chlordecone, un scandale d'Etat," *la 1ere*, (27 May 2020). See [here](#).

60 Cécile Baquey, "Le chlordecone, un scandale d'Etat," *la 1ere*, (27 May 2020). See [here](#).

61 L Brureau et al, "Cancer de la prostate en Guadeloupe: incidence, mortalité, caractéristiques cliniques et anatomopathologiques," *Bulletin du cancer* 96.2 (2009): 165-170. <https://doi.org/10.1684/bdc.2008.0811>

62 Luc Multigner et al, "Chlordecone exposure and risk of prostate cancer," *Journal of Clinical Oncology* 28.21 (2010): 3457-3462. <https://doi.org/10.1200/JCO.2009.27.2153>

63 From interview with Ghyslaine Vedeux.

64 "Les révoltés de la banana contre un rééqine féodal," *l'Humanité*, (27 March 2015). See [here](#).

exported to France and other countries.<sup>65,66</sup> Like in the Sámi homelands in Northern Europe and the Arctic and Inuit territories in Greenland, this too is extractivism serving (neo)colonial capitalism. The food produced by these lands is extracted for the benefit of colonising countries in Europe, and the profits do not go to the local, largely Black community, but to the small class of former slave-owners who have historically benefited from exploiting the community. The exploitation is extreme and continues today: at Bois-Debout, 10 workers have died over the past 25 years in workplace accidents.<sup>67</sup>

The local population cannot live off of bananas and sugar. The land that is available to them to grow their own produce is limited by geography and by the plantations. Monocropping has also resulted in soil erosion, and increased exposure to drought, worsening growing conditions. Like Greenland, due to its remote location and colonial ties that enforce economic dependency on France, importing food and other products is expensive. Food and drink are over 30% more expensive in Guadeloupe than they are in metropolitan France.<sup>68</sup> Former slave-owners also profit off this, as the major supermarkets in Guadeloupe and Martinique are also in the hands of the wealthiest béké, the Hayot family.<sup>69</sup>

## Crisis after crisis

**Islands in the Caribbean - some of which are part of the European Union - are also heavily affected by climate disruption. Temperatures are projected to rise 2°C by 2050, which would lead to disastrous consequences such as reduced rainfall, droughts, sea-level rise and beach erosion.<sup>70,71</sup> Hurricanes, already common in**

**the Caribbean, are likely to increase in frequency and intensity. In 2017, hurricane Maria hit Guadeloupe and Martinique hard, just days after hurricane Irma had passed through the region. It ravaged Guadeloupe in particular, causing power outages and at least two deaths.<sup>72</sup> The plantations and local food systems were heavily impacted; banana production came to a halt temporarily.<sup>73</sup>**

"It's a huge scandal. The food in the supermarkets is not remotely affordable. Fishing is an important part of the local food system, but the fish have been contaminated by toxins in the water. It is a big trap for everyone who lives there. If you live there and you are a local producer, you can produce nothing. But if you produce something, they will say, your produce has poison, your fish, is not good. It's a double trap; the first trap is that everything is contaminated, and the second trap is the economic scandal. Everyone is forced now to consume what is in the big supermarket, of which the owner is the family Hayot."

*Ghislain Vedeux, President of Le CRAN and Vice-Chair at European Network Against Racism*

65 ODEADOM, *Rapport d'activité 2019*. Accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

66 "Our companies," Banane de Guadeloupe & Martinique, accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

67 "Les révoltés de la banana contre un régence féodal," *l'Humanité*, (27 March 2015). See [here](#).

68 Institut national de la consommation, "Commerce en outre-mer: des écarts de prix allant de +6,9% + 12,5% avec la métropole." See [here](#).

69 Léa Lejeune, "Les 5 familles qui dominent la Martinique," *L'express*, (05 January 2012). See [here](#).

70 UNDP Climate Change Adaptation, "Latin America and the Caribbean." See [here](#).

71 Leonard A. Nurse et al, "Small Islands," in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part B: Regional Aspects*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (Cambridge UP: Cambridge, 2014): pp. 1613-1865. See [here](#).

72 Robin Respaut and Dave Graham, "L'ouragan Maria frappe Porto Rico, neuf morts dans les Antilles," *Reuters*, (20 September 2017). See [here](#).

73 P. Robert and J. Champion, "Maria, c'était il y a un an...", *la 1ère*, (3 October 2018). See [here](#).

Guadeloupe needed to invest serious funds to re-start its economy and rebuild housing and other buildings. It received 5 million euros from the EU Solidarity fund, together with Saint-Martin.<sup>74,75</sup> While such funds from France and the EU are always framed as benevolent 'aid', French colonialism exposed these island communities more to climate disruption in the first place. For example, European settlement patterns in river valleys and estuaries, adopted from the 16th century onwards, has further exposed these communities to higher winds and flooding.<sup>76</sup>

The compounding effect of setback after setback is clear. Slavery and (neo)colonial wealth extraction, followed by the poisonous impacts of chlordecone, increasing destruction caused by climate breakdown, and the current COVID-19 crisis created a situation that is almost impossible to surmount. This is the case in terms of human and ecological health, but also in economic terms. Continual wealth extraction and its supporting infrastructure, such as the use of chlordecone to produce more bananas, meaning that any economic recovery is out of reach within a (neo)colonial capitalist model. This example also shows that environmental justice is not separate from climate justice, and these are in turn not separate from anti-racist and decolonising struggle. It is painfully evident that the French state does not value Black lives in metropolitan France or in its overseas departments.

## Community Mobilisation

**Access to decision-making for the inhabitants of Martinique and Guadeloupe is generally limited, given the legacy of colonialism and lack of attention given to the French Antilles by metropolitan France. Nevertheless, there are a number of groups taking action in various ways against these injustices, with a focus on the chlordecone emergency. The collective**

74 "Solidarity Fund provides initial financial aid for Saint-Martin and Guadeloupe," European Commission, (13 December 2017). See [here](#).

75 Kirk Semple, "Where, or Even Whether, to Rebuild," *The New York Times*, (7 October 2019). See [here](#).

76 Kristina Douglass and Jago Cooper. "Archaeology, environmental justice, and climate change on islands of the Caribbean and southwestern Indian Ocean." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117.15 (2020): 8254-8262. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1914211117>

**zéro chlordecone, zéro poison<sup>77</sup> has been active since 2018, pushing for environmental reparations. They have been clear in linking chlordecone to other structural injustices with a colonial legacy, such as slavery on the plantations.**

A number of associations, including Le CRAN<sup>78</sup>, l'association VIVRE<sup>79</sup>, the collective *Lyannaj pou dépolyé Matinik*<sup>80</sup>, launched a civil court case in November 2019 to force the state to take responsibility for the poisoning of inhabitants of Martinique and Guadeloupe.<sup>81</sup> It was a civil action with 2000 co-complainants from the French Antilles. Since the court case started, activists in Martinique and Guadeloupe have been blocking the supermarkets that belong to the Hayot family every Saturday.<sup>82</sup>

Initiatives such as *Ka'Ba Péyi*<sup>83</sup>, the local participatory market in Martinique that is organised by local producers and community-members, are other community-led responses that work to undo the harm caused by France's (neo)colonial extractivist agenda which depletes the island's resources.<sup>84</sup> *Ka'Ba Péyi* offers products without pesticides, despite the predicament that the island is in, and has a zero-tolerance policy with regards to waste as well. Such food-systems initiatives developed by the local population deserve support.

To conclude, without (neo)colonial capitalism and its drive to produce ever more crops for export to the (neo)colonial powers in Europe, the land in Martinique and Guadeloupe would not have been as depleted<sup>85</sup> there would have likely been no use of pesticides akin to chlordecone and the local food system would have been structured very differently.

77 See <https://www.facebook.com/LyannajKontAmpwazonnman/>

78 See <https://www.le-cran.fr>

79 See <https://www.vivre-asso.com>

80 See <https://www.facebook.com/lyannajpoudepolye/>

81 Karine Zabulon "Des associations réclament un complément d'enquête après les révélations d'enfouissement de chlordecone," *La 1ere*, (5 March 2020). See [here](#).

82 Alexandre-Reza Kokabi, "Le chlordecone et l'impunité empoisonnent les Antilles," *Reporterre.net*, (6 November 2020). See [here](#).

83 See <https://www.facebook.com/kabapeyia>

84 See <https://www.facebook.com/kabapeyia>

85 Kristina Douglass and Jago Cooper. "Archaeology, environmental justice, and climate change on islands of the Caribbean and southwestern Indian Ocean." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117.15 (2020): 8254-8262. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1914211117>

# Air Pollution And Environmental Racism In Les Quartiers Populaires

One of the first studies on environmental justice in metropolitan France indicates that hazardous sites like incinerators and waste management facilities are more likely to be located near towns with higher immigrant populations.<sup>86</sup> Given the lack of data on race or ethnicity in France due to laws which prohibit equality data collection, the 'immigrant' marker is used by proxy.<sup>87</sup> In the context of larger cities in France, racialised suburbs or districts are also closer to large ring roads and intersections known as *échangeurs*. Air quality in these areas is notably worse, due to nitrous oxide and other car emissions. This air pollution is often worsened by warming temperatures. Such city-suburbs are known as *quartiers populaires*, where low-income families, often racialised, more commonly live and work. The racialised population are often of North African descent, having come to France from former colonies.<sup>88</sup>

## Air pollution and environmental racism

There are a number of sources of air pollution; two important ones are incineration and vehicle emissions. Incineration in Europe has increased dramatically over the years, with a 101% increase between 1996 and 2018.<sup>89</sup> France is historically a country with high incineration rates, although these have dropped in the past five years.<sup>90</sup> There are real health impacts attached to living near an incinerator, which releases dioxins, furans, acid gases and other injurious gases. Certain types of cancer, as well as preterm births, are associated with living close to one.<sup>91</sup>

The placement of incinerators in France is an example of environmental racism. In 2014, for every 1% increase in foreign-born inhabitants, a French town's chance of having



an incinerator nearby increased by nearly 30%.<sup>92</sup> It was shown that the incinerators were placed after the towns already had considerable immigrant populations, showing the policy-driven nature of environmental racism. While foreign-born individuals are not necessarily racialised and not all racialised individuals are foreign-born, this does give a sense of the environmental racism at hand. It also demonstrates that environmental racism is instrumentalised through state policy, developed and enacted by a government which values the health and wellbeing of its racialised and poor citizens less.

Additionally, roadways and large *échangeurs*, such as the *échangeur de Bagnole* in Paris, are usually situated in the outer regions of the city, which is where *quartiers populaires* are usually located. These cause a lot of air pollution that impact the local communities in the suburbs of Paris, who are often racialised. It is estimated that 250 000 to 300 000 vehicles pass through the Bagnole intersection daily.<sup>93,94</sup> It is one of the largest intersections in Europe,

86 Lucie Laurian, "Environmental injustice in France," *Journal of environmental planning and management* 51.1 (2008): 55-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640560701712267>

87 European Network Against Racism, Equality Data Collection: *Facts and Principles*. Accessed 15 October 2021. See [here](#).

88 Chantal Brutel, "La localisation géographique des immigrés," *Insee Première* (19 avril 2016): no 1591. See [here](#).

89 Eurostat, "Municipal Waste Statistics," *European Commission*, July 2020. See [here](#).

90 Eurostat data browser, "Municipal waste by waste management operations," *European Commission*. 3 July 2020. See [here](#).

91 Peter W. Tait et al. "The health impacts of waste incineration: a systematic review." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 44.1 (2020): 40-48. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1753-6405.12939>

92 Lucie Laurian, and Richard Funderburg. "Environmental justice in France? A spatio-temporal analysis of incinerator location." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 57.3 (2014): 424-446. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2012.749395>

93 Airparif, "Airparif Actualité: Quel impact sur la qualité de l'air d'un échangeur routier urbain? Le cas de l'échangeur de Bagnole," *Airparif*, No 25 (April 2005). See [here](#).

94 Claire Guédon, "Le gigantesque noeud routier de Bagnole, cet enfer urbain," *le Parisien*, (18 August 2019.) See [here](#).

and the area also touts one of the largest international bus stations in the region, contributing to the traffic.

"You drive past the quartiers populaires and you see how grey the sky is. You have asthma rates that are through the roof in those areas."

*Inès Seddiki, director of GHETT'UP*

Again, it is not an accident that these roads and intersections were placed at the edge of the city of Paris, dividing the city proper from the quartiers populaires. The road was a concerted policy effort to separate Paris from the surrounding suburban areas that were deemed less elegant and pleasing, perhaps due to their migrant populations.<sup>95</sup> The health effects of this ring-road and the intersections are very real. Nitrogen dioxide emissions have been found to be above permissible levels over the past two decades,<sup>96</sup> and if breathed in, can lead to asthma and susceptibility to respiratory infections.<sup>97</sup>

Other relevant environmental aspects in this urban or suburban context include access to green spaces, which often reduce exposure to air pollution.<sup>98</sup> They are also important for recreation and social activities and improve mental health.<sup>99</sup> These are threatened by corporate projects, such as the EuropaCity mall in Gonesse on the outskirts of Paris; the mega-project was due to take over rich agricultural land in a suburb where just over a quarter

of the population has an immigrant background.<sup>100,101</sup> The project has been delayed indefinitely due to public opposition and organising, but may still happen.<sup>102</sup> Such a move is in line with colonial capitalism; such malls are rarely for the benefit for the local communities, often from former colonies of France, or the environment they live in. Local shopkeepers have indicated that they would be outcompeted by the mall, for example.<sup>103</sup>

## Climate

**Air pollution may worsen as the climate crisis ensues. Warming temperatures can mean that localised pollution gets even worse as hot air stagnates, trapping air pollutants in the lower atmosphere.<sup>104</sup> This can worsen the impacts of air pollution on respiratory health. A feedback loop can also occur, as certain forms of pollution like black carbon trap heat, accelerating warming – although some pollutants like sulfates actually reduce temperatures, albeit artificially.<sup>105</sup> This means that temperatures in quartiers populaires may rise above those in the wider Parisian region, which have already soared above 40°C in the past two years.<sup>106</sup>**

Additionally, green spaces are cooling; without them temperatures flare in concrete jungles, making them increasingly unliveable.<sup>107</sup> This 'urban heat island effect' was among the worries of the campaigners against the EuropaCity project.<sup>108</sup> They also provide spaces for people who live in small apartments, often with many family-members, to cool off and socialise together; to be

95 Fiona Moghaddam, "Une brève histoire du périurbain parisien," *franceculture.fr*, (29 May 2019). See [here](#).

96 Cécile Honoré, Fabrice Dugay, and Pierre Pernot. "Proximité au trafic routier et pollution de l'air en Ile-de-France." *Vertigo-la revue électronique en sciences de l'environnement* Hors-série 15 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.4000/vertigo.12805>

97 U.S. EPA, "Basic Information about NO<sub>2</sub>," United States Environmental Protection Agency. Accessed 15 October 2021. See [here](#).

98 WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Urban green spaces and health*, (Copenhagen: 2016). See [here](#).

99 Jo Barton and Mike Rogerson, "The importance of greenspace for mental health," *BJPsych international* 14.4 (2017): 79-81. <https://doi.org/10.1192/S2056474000002051>

100 "Étrangers – Immigrés en 2013: Commune de Gonesse," *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques*, (30 June 2016). See [here](#).

101 Clémence Pèlerin, "EuropaCity: a 'Hypr-place' for a Globalised Europe?," *Green European Journal*, (20 January 2020). See [here](#).

102 FrancelInfo, "Abandon du projet EuropaCity: 'Je ne crois pas qu'une reconversion se décrète avec un haut-fonctionnaire qui fait un rapport', s'agace le maire de Gonesse," *FrancelInfo*, (28 November 2020). See [here](#).

103 Angélique Chrisafis, "'Dubais in Paris': French climate protesters fight plans for €3bn theme park," *the Guardian*, (16 June 2018). See [here](#).

104 Climate Central, "Climate change is threatening air quality across the country," *Climate Central*, (31 July 2019). See [here](#).

105 European Commission, "Air Pollution and Climate Change," *Science for Environmental Policy*, Special Issue, 24 (November 2010). See [here](#).

106 "42,6°C à Paris: record absolu de chaleur battu!" *Météo France*, 25 July 2019. See [here](#).

107 WHO Regional Office for Europe, *Urban green spaces and health*, (Copenhagen: 2016). See [here](#).

108 Albert Levy, "EuropaCity: 'Comment peut-on promouvoir un pareil urbanisme dans le contexte de crise climatique actuel?'" *Le Monde*, 2 September 2019. See [here](#).

able to breathe. Privatising such spaces for more capital gain of wealthy corporations is taking this right away from racialised and other marginalised communities living in these suburbs.

## Community Mobilisation

"The youth in the quartiers populaires actually don't really have a say, firstly because they don't know that they can have a say,"  
*Inès Seddiki, director of GHETT'UP*

The barriers to access decision-making on these issues for youth in the quartiers populaires can be manifold. Through GHETT'UP<sup>109</sup>, an organisation that empowers racialised youth living in and around Paris to take political and social action in their neighbourhoods, a number of them have written to their political representatives about various issues including rubbish pick-up and recycling in their neighbourhoods, with some response. Another organisation that supports residents of the suburb of Garges-lès-Gonesse in carrying out changemaking projects for their communities, Espoir et Création, facilitated a local initiative called 'le Clean Challenge.' The goal was to mobilise youth to clean up trash in these suburban areas, and Seddiki says the next step is to politicise the fact that waste facilities are sorely lacking in the area.

Another relevant issue is the disconnect between the realities of racialised communities in the suburbs, and those of the largely white, climate community. Reportedly, the youth Seddiki works with don't identify with Youth for Climate, in part because their everyday worries and realities are very different; people in the quartiers populaires may be more worried about making ends meet

109 See <https://ghettup.fr/>

"The Parisians don't really understand what it means to live here. To study here. To take public transportation here. To work here."  
*Inès Seddiki, director of GHETT'UP*

than climate disruption. GHETT'UP has started 'The Conversation', a way to bring youth from the quartiers populaires around Paris and youth from the city itself into conversation about life in the suburbs, including around the environment and sustainability. She sees it as a first step in building bridges, towards more anti-racist environmental action.

Seddiki cites Comité Adama<sup>110</sup> as a trailblazer in being able to build these bridges, addressing air pollution in the suburbs in particular. Comité Adama is an anti-racist organisation working on police brutality. In July 2020, the organisation, set up in the wake of Adama Traoré's death at the hands of French police, put on a demonstration titled 'on veut respirer' or 'we want to breathe' in collaboration with Alternatiba<sup>111</sup>, a French grassroots environmental organisation pushing for system change<sup>112</sup>. This demonstration was aimed at connecting the two struggles, bringing the calls of 'I can't breathe' from cases of police murder of Black people in the United States and in France together with the lack of clean air and green space that racialised communities suffer from. It was a commitment to the credo Black Lives Matter, particularly in the climate struggle.

Le Front de Mères<sup>113</sup> is another citizens collective working to combat the climate crisis, racism and other justice issues with an intersectional approach. Le Front de Mères was founded in Bagnolet by a group of racialised mothers, and opened Verdragon<sup>114</sup>, France's first House of Popular

110 See <https://twitter.com/laveritepradama>

111 See <https://alternatiba.eu/en/>

112 "Génération Adama, Génération climat: 'on veut respirer'", *Alternatiba.eu*, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

113 See <https://www.front2meres.org>

114 See <https://www.facebook.com/verdragon>

“We do not want our children to die because of the pollution of the motorway interchange 93, which borders our homes and our schools, we do not want our children to die asphyxiated under the weight of three police officers”.<sup>116</sup>

*Fatima Ouassak, spokeswoman of the Front de Mères*

There have also been a number of small-scale blockades of échangeurs in the Paris area to bring the levels and health effects of air pollution to light, as well protests in the space that EuropaCity was destined for. According to Seddiki, these are not led by local racialised community-members such as mothers, fathers, students and other everyday people living in the area. However, there are activists of racialised communities involved. As mentioned, the actions against EuropaCity have effectively held the project back, although the project has not definitively been cancelled. Nevertheless, the involvement of local communities who are primarily affected by these issues remains an important step to be taken.

Ecology, which offers workshop spaces for the community to discuss the climate crisis, buy affordable vegetables and more.<sup>115</sup>



115 Isma Le Dantec, “À Bagnolet, l’écologie populaire inaugure sa maison, Verdragon.” *Socialter*, (11 June 2021). See [here](#).

116 Isma Le Dantec, “À Bagnolet, l’écologie populaire inaugure sa maison, Verdragon.” *Socialter*, (11 June 2021). See [here](#).



# Section 5: Antigypsyism

Towards Accommodation  
And Utility Justice



**There is still debate about how Roma and Irish Traveller communities came to be and how they became itinerant peoples, though many accounts cite persecution as a reason for wandering.<sup>117</sup> In this report, the term ‘racialised communities’ is inclusive of groups such as Travellers who may not be considered ‘people of colour’, but certainly experience racism, and are therefore racialised. Historically, Roma and Irish Travellers experience serious exclusion on the basis of their perceived race or ethnic background; this is a mechanism of (neo) colonial capitalism that persists today. Antigypsyism, or racism against Roma, Irish Travellers and other communities stereotyped as ‘gypsies’ often includes the denial of safe, appropriate accommodation and affordable utilities. Many Roma communities are forced to live near landfills or other hazardous waste sites that are flood-prone to make way for industrial or tourism developments, while Irish Travellers often do not have access to the culturally specific accommodation they deserve, and are denied reliable access to water, affordable heating and electricity, otherwise known as utility poverty.**

These problems worsen as the climate crisis continues. The air, water and soil pollution from landfills will worsen with climate disruption, and floods will become more common, increasingly exposing these communities to instability and illness. Additionally, the current energy transition, with its underlying (neo)colonial capitalist logic, will likely make utilities scarcer and more expensive than they previously were. There is also a compounding effect, as these communities face so much structural oppression that the impacts of climate breakdown simply add to insurmountable setbacks and violence.

Even though no wealth extraction is occurring here, the protection of wealth from those deemed unworthy or as leaching resources is key to (neo)colonial capitalism. This section explores such exclusion in the context of Roma communities near the city of Cluj-Napoca in Romania, and of Travellers in Ireland.

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117 Aoife Bhreatnach, “Confusing origins and histories: The case of Irish Travellers,” *Irish Journal of Anthropology* 10.1 (2007): 30-5.

# Roma communities at the Pata Rât landfill

“They systematically take Roma families from the city, all these years, and take them here, so they can fix the ‘Roma problem’.”  
*Alexandru Fechete, Roma activist who formerly resided at Pata Rât.*

While Roma people are not monolithic, they are often spatially segregated from other communities, which allows for uniquely negative environmental conditions around them. This is also the case with racialised communities in French suburbs, as well as in other cases in this report. Roma are often evicted from places of higher value to make room for other, corporate development projects.

Research shows that gentrification is most harmful to racialised communities, in this case Roma people are often forced to live on land cut off from public services and utilities, whether that is water, energy or transportation.<sup>118,119</sup> This section will deal specifically with the Roma communities at Pata Rât, an illegal landfill on the edges of Cluj-Napoca in Romania. However, there are many more examples of Roma living near hazardous waste sites, from Miercurea Ciuc in Romania to Podgorica in Montenegro.

## Pata Rât and the Waste Industry

Four Roma communities totalling 2000 people, the majority of which are children, are forced to live at the Pata Rât landfill on the outskirts of Cluj-Napoca.<sup>120</sup> The city, the second largest in Romania, is a developing tech hub, billed as the ‘Silicon Valley of Eastern Europe’.<sup>121</sup> By contrast, the communities at Pata Rât are forced to live

in relative squalor. They were evicted by the authorities at various times from the 1970s onwards to the area around the landfill.<sup>122</sup> A former chemical waste dump is also nearby, around the landfill.<sup>123,124</sup>

Romania imports waste from other countries in order to process it, including from Western Europe. Waste is big business, and since China closed its doors to waste imports three years ago, there has been an increase in waste smuggling into Romania and other Eastern European countries that process it.<sup>125</sup>

Nevertheless, Romania has notoriously poor waste management. It dumps 80% of its own municipal waste in landfills.<sup>126</sup> The European Commission has taken Romania to the European Court of Justice for their poor waste management in the past, and in October 2020, called on the country to close 101 substandard landfills that should have been closed in July the year before.<sup>127</sup> It has previously called on Romania to close Pata Rât, and allocated funding towards a new waste disposal system.<sup>128</sup> Regardless, waste from all over Europe ends up at landfills such as Pata Rât, where the Roma communities living there reckon with the health impacts of it every day.

“[The air pollution makes] it difficult to breathe, it’s unbelievable.”  
*Ciprian-Valentin Nodis, Interethnic Association of Dumitrita*

118 Council of Europe, *Managing Gentrification Intercultural Cities Policy Study*, (Strasbourg: 2020). See [here](#).

119 Patrizia Heidegger and Katy Wiese, “Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental Racism against Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe,” (European Environmental Bureau: Brussels, 2020). See [here](#).

120 From interview with Alexandru Fechete.

121 SCC Europe staff, “Cluj-Napoca: the ‘Silicon Valley’ of Eastern Europe,” *SmartCitiesCouncil Europe*, 14 August 2018. See [here](#).

122 From interview with Ciprian Nodis.

123 From interview with Ciprian-Valentin Nodis.

124 Romanița Lordache, “Cluj Tribunal sanctions forced eviction of Roma families and their relocation in inadequate conditions in Pata Rat Romania,” *European network of legal experts in the non-discrimination field*, 7 January 2014. See [here](#).

125 Marian Pavalasc “How Romania Turned Into An Illegal Dumping Ground for EU Waste,” *Rferl*, (29 August 2021). See [here](#).

126 European Parliament, “Waste management in the EU: infographic with facts and figures,” 03 December 2020. See [here](#).

127 European Commission, “October infringements package: key decisions,” 30 October 2020. See [here](#).

128 Elise Mazaud, “Treated like trash: how Roma in Romania are forced to live by city dumps,” *META from the EEB*, August 20, 2019. See [here](#).

## Environmental Racism

The health impacts of living near a landfill are innumerable. Gases like ammonia and hydrogen sulphide are often given off by landfills, causing breathing difficulties and irritation of the airways.<sup>129,130</sup> Toxic chemicals from the landfill and the closed chemical dump also leach into the water and soil, polluting the local river. This is one of the water sources some of the Roma at Pata Rât use, as not all of them have access to running water.

Climate breakdown worsens the impacts of living near the landfill. As the environment gets warmer, the air pollution and odour emitted by the landfill also becomes far worse. Associated respiratory illnesses would intensify accordingly. Furthermore, risks of fire increase as well with increased temperatures, creating far thicker air pollution when spreading at a landfill. The winters have also become milder. Under normal circumstances, rodents, mosquitoes and other illness-vectors often die off in the winter, giving both the people and the land a 'break',

"The owners of the landfill start fires to incinerate the waste at the landfill, to reduce the waste to meet the quotas set by local environmental authorities. The warmer weather in the summers worsens the impact. The garbage smokes for weeks. And it's so dense, you cannot see one meter ahead."

*Alexandru Fechete, Roma activist who formerly resided at Pata Rât.*

according to Roma activist Alexandru Fechete. As the temperatures get warmer, this 'break' is reduced, meaning that Roma communities at Pata Rât are increasingly exposed to vector-borne disease.<sup>131</sup>

"The owners of the landfill blame the local children for the fires. I don't think that if you live there, you would like to have a lot of smoke. Roma children have died in these fires."

*Ciprian-Valentin Nodis, Interethnic Association of Dumitrita*

Heavy storms bring floods to Pata Rât. Not only does the floodwater and other sewage occasionally enter people's homes, but communities that are forced to live in flood-prone areas will likely see an increase in these floods and related illnesses such as hepatitis E, as storms become more common. Again, there is a compounding effect; the repeated exposure to various forms of structural violence such as evictions, lack of housing, water and other utilities, all of which is reinforced by the climate crisis. Living in a state of continual crisis without breaks diminishes any ability to overcome and fight structural violence.

This dynamic has many trappings of a (neo)colonial capitalist regime. There are two (neo)colonising capitalist forces involved; the industry-owners that profit from dumping waste in landfills like Pata Rât, and also the nations that export waste to Romania.

Waste is the opposite of wealth, and akin to the impact of emissions, they are dumped near undervalued people in hazardous areas. The placement of the Roma near the landfill is no accident; the authorities put them there to clean up the image of the city, purposely excluding them and endangering them.

129 Jae Hac Ko, Qiyong Xu, and Yong-Chul Jang, "Emissions and control of hydrogen sulfide at landfills: a review," *Critical Reviews in Environmental Science and Technology* 45.19 (2015): 2043-2083.

130 U.S. EPA. "IRIS Toxicological Review of Ammonia Noncancer Inhalation (Final Report)," (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Washington DC, 2016). See [here](#).

131 J. A. Patz, et al. "Climate change and infectious diseases." *Climate change and human health: risks and responses* 2 (2003): 103-32. See [here](#).

## Decision-making, Blame and Responses

The evictions of the Roma communities to Pata Rât, which happened without warning or legal grounds, indicate that the local government is anything but interested in giving Roma access to decisions. They have covered two sections of the landfill with soil, according to Nodis, but it's not clear that this has had much of an effect. Fechete and others<sup>132</sup> state that there is also a lot of corruption among local politicians, who position friends at the local environmental agencies responsible for measuring pollution. Additionally, Roma communities are often blamed for various problems, including environmental ones, even though they are largely victims of the (neo)colonial capitalist systems that resulted in these problems. Being blamed for the fires at Pata Rât is an example of this; the European Environmental Bureau report enumerates others.<sup>133</sup>

## Community Mobilisation

It is not surprising that the Roma community at Pata Rât generally has very little trust in the authorities, and that they organise to demonstrate and litigate against the city. A successful example of this is the Coastei community, who were evicted from the city to Pat Rât in 2010, and organised demonstrations to oppose their eviction. They also brought a court case against the local authorities, supported by the European Roma Rights Centre.<sup>134</sup> They won the court case and received a small amount of money as compensation.<sup>135</sup> Other families have brought another court case against the local authorities together with the Desire Foundation, targeting the environmental harms and seeking compensation.<sup>136</sup> At the EU level, very little has been done for these communities to remedy the environmental racism they face.<sup>137</sup>

132 Mihaela Rodina, "Residents split on future of Romania's trash heap 'time-bomb,'" *AFP*, 18 May 2019. See [here](#).

133 Patrizia Heidegger and Katy Wiese, "Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental Racism against Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe," (European Environmental Bureau: Brussels, 2020). See [here](#).

134 "Romania: bring Roma back to the city of Cluj-Napoca," *European Roma Rights Centre*, 17 December 2012. See [here](#).

135 Interview with Ciprian Ciprian-Valentin Nodis.

136 "ROMANIA: Interview with Linda Greta Zsiga, the first Roma running for European elections, who fights for rights to housing for all," *Civic Space Watch*, 11 December 2019. See [here](#).

137 Patrizia Heidegger and Katy Wiese, "Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental Racism against Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe," (European Environmental Bureau: Brussels, 2020). See [here](#).

Another community resistance initiative is the Pata-Cluj social housing project<sup>138</sup>, set up in 2016 through a European Economic Area grant.<sup>139</sup> The social housing was built away from the landfill in cooperation with the authorities, for 35 families from Pata Rât and has contributed in a small but positive way, both Nodis and Fechete concur. While many more remain at the landfill, a second round of funding has been secured and more housing will therefore be made available. The Desire Foundation has also been pushing for housing rights for the Roma communities at Pata Rât through their initiative Căși Sociale ACUM, or Social Housing NOW.<sup>140</sup> Among other things, they organise demonstrations on the anniversary of the last set of evictions to the landfill, according to Nodis.

Both Fechete and Nodis indicate that the Roma at Pata Rât are too busy surviving day-to-day to worry about climate change, which is a recurring theme among many racialised communities. Nevertheless, it is clear that safe housing is central to these communities' ability to plan for the long-term and be resilient to compounding crises.



138 See <https://www.facebook.com/PatadinCluj>

139 "Social interventions for de-segregation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in Cluj Metropolitan Area, including the disadvantaged Roma," *EEA grants*, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

140 See <https://casisocialeacum.ro/>

# Travellers, Utility Poverty And Climate In Ireland

Roughly 31,000 Irish Travellers (henceforth Travellers) live in Ireland,<sup>141</sup> and have been recognised as a distinct ethnic group, native to the country. They face Antigypsyism on various fronts, including the denial of culturally appropriate accommodation and utilities such as fuel for heating. The denial of culturally appropriate housing is yet another symptom of (neo)colonial capitalism; it is part of coercing Travellers into assimilating within mainstream society, denying sovereignty and particular traditions to a community. Additionally, the current energy transition, with its underlying capitalist logic, may allow the prices of critical utilities to skyrocket if supplying 'green' energy becomes far more expensive. This will leave low-income Travellers in Ireland without heat and water.

## An Accommodation Crisis and Energy Poverty

The traditions of moving around or itinerancy, and living with extended family, are central to Traveller identity and culture. Accommodation that suits this mobility and community living, including group housing, halting sites and trailers, are therefore similarly important to Traveller communities.<sup>142</sup> However, the government has long discouraged mobility, framing it as a problem, proposing a national settlement, assimilation and rehabilitation programme in the 1960s,<sup>143</sup> and criminalising camping on roadsides and public lands as recently as 2002.<sup>144,145</sup> Therefore, despite the Traveller Accommodation Act in 1998 that requires the provision of appropriate accommodation, more than 85% of Travellers live in 'settled' or static accommodation.<sup>146</sup> Additionally, although Travellers only make up 0.7%

of the Irish population,<sup>147</sup> a stunning 7.5% of Ireland's homeless population are Travellers.<sup>148</sup> The community faces a lot of problems on the accommodation front.

"At least 4000 Travellers are living in sub-standard, poorly-serviced and maintained sites.

Some of these sites don't have electricity. They don't have water. The sites are often remote, not easily accessible by public transport, and are often flood-prone. In the past, they also lived closer to landfills, with all of the consequential health effects."

*Martin Collins, a member of the Traveller community and co-Director of Pavee Point*

Those living in trailers have unique problems to deal with, in part due to the legacy of assimilationist policy. Some Travellers have been forced to buy diesel generators in order to access electricity, which are expensive, and cause a lot of pollution.<sup>149</sup>

80% of Travellers are also unemployed. This could be due to the structural discrimination Travellers face when seeking employment, including ethnic profiling, racism in hiring practices and a lack of transport infrastructure from

141 "Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion: Irish Traveller - Infographic," Central Statistics Office. Last accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

142 "Accommodation," Irish Traveller Movement, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

143 Una M. Crowley, "Liberal rule through non liberal means: The attempted settlement of Irish travellers (1955–1975)," *Irish Geography* 38.2 (2005): 128-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00750770509555855>

144 Frank McDonald, "Law to stop Travellers occupying land without consent is enacted," *The Irish Times*, 2 July 2002. See [here](#).

145 "Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2002," e-Irish Statute Book, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

146 "Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion: Irish Travellers – Socio-Economic Aspects and Housing," Central Statistics Office. Last accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

147 "Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion: Irish Travellers – Demographics," Central Statistics Office. Last accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

148 Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion: Nationalities," Central Statistics Office. Last accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

149 From interview with Martin Collins.

remote areas to urban sites of employment and more.<sup>150</sup> Many living in trailers are unable to afford heating. **Most trailers are older and poorly insulated, posing problems.**<sup>151</sup> This is known as fuel poverty, as many of the trailers require some form of fuel or heating (as opposed to heat pumps and the like).

**“Many Traveller families cannot afford a high standard trailer, so many of the trailers are sub-standard, and not very energy efficient. So, they’re very expensive to keep heated, in the winter in particular.”**

*Martin Collins, a member of the Traveller community and co-Director of Pavee Point*

All in all, the local authorities are failing in providing Traveller-specific accommodation, according to Collins and other Traveller organisations. **The wait for a halting site can be between 10 to 20 years,** according to Hugh Friel, the Men’s Development Worker at the Donegal Travellers’ Project.<sup>152</sup> **“At the local authority level, there’s lots of objections, and lots of resistance, informed by racism from the local residents who don’t want Travellers beside them”,** according to Collins who cites a case in Coolquay, where local residents quashed a proposal for a halting site.<sup>153</sup> Besides the assimilation processes which are a part of colonial capitalism, another key component, racist exclusion, is also at play.

150 “Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion: Irish Travellers – Socio-Economic Aspects and Housing,” Central Statistics Office. Last accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

151 Stuart Stamp and Michelle Kearns, “Accommodation Ethnicity: Addressing Energy Poverty Among Travellers Living in Mobile Homes and Trailers,” National Traveller MABS (June 2019). See [here](#).

152 See <https://donegaltravellersproject.ie>

153 Sylvia Pownall, “Disappointment as Coolquay halting site plans quashed by council,” *Dublin Gazette*, 18 October 2018. See [here](#).

## An Unjust Transition

**The energy transition requires a serious injection of capital on behalf of the state and its citizens, to rebuild energy infrastructure around renewables and phase out fossil fuels. If done without a justice-based, anti-racist approach, such a transition would have serious implications for Travellers, who already face a serious accommodation and utility crisis. They might be forced into even higher levels of fuel or utility poverty. Rising temperatures may cause electricity usage to increase even further (with the use of fans and air conditioners),<sup>154</sup> exacerbating the situation. They may be left with obsolete energy infrastructure, making it impossible to heat their homes or use electricity in their homes.**<sup>155</sup>

Improving insulation, energy efficiency and installing new heating systems by retrofitting trailers is therefore an essential part of a just energy transition. **The government of Ireland has made a budget of 109 million euros available to support lower income households in retrofitting their homes in 2021,<sup>156</sup> but has not created a similar scheme for trailers.**

**“We have a policy that is caring for the needs of the majority population, which excludes Travellers who live in trailers. I would like to see a similar scheme available for Travellers who want to upgrade their trailers.”**

*Martin Collins, a member of the Traveller community and co-Director of Pavee Point*

154 Emma Charlton, “How air conditioners contribute to inequality and energy poverty,” World Economic Forum, 06 July 2020. See [here](#).

155 Sanya Carley and David M. Konisky, “The justice and equity implications of the clean energy transition,” *Nature Energy* (2020): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-020-0641-6>

156 Department of Transport, “Budget 2021 funding for the Departments of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and Transport reflects Government ambition for a green, jobs-led recovery,” *Gov.ie*, 13 October 2020. See [here](#).

As with Roma communities, those Travellers who live in flood-prone sites may experience an increase as the frequency of severe storms increases and sea-levels rise with climate breakdown. Traveller communities which could have simply moved away from flood-prone areas with their trailers are currently stuck in halting sites, as parking on roadsides and on public and private properties is prohibited. Pavee Point<sup>157</sup>, one of the main advocacy organisations for Travellers and Roma in Ireland, has been advocating for a network of transient sites so that Travellers can resume nomadic life,<sup>158</sup> but this has not been implemented thus far.

## Community mobilisation

**Traveller organisations, such as Pavee Point, have been around for many years and are represented in various national structures on accommodation and other issues. They thus have access to lawmakers and policy decisions, but Collins says that the policies do not get implemented at the local level. Pavee Point and other Traveller organisations have been pushing for a centralised National Traveller Accommodation Authority which would implement housing for Travellers, instead of placing the responsibility with local authorities who have not been reliable.**<sup>159</sup>

Nevertheless, the Department of Housing has started a pilot scheme to access a grant in order to buy a modern trailer, giving initial funding to 5 local authorities. Pavee Point and a number of other Traveller organisations are on the monitoring committee. While this is a step in the right direction, Collins would like to see this scaled up to a national program quickly.

Collins also made the point that Travellers were the “original recyclers”. When their halting sites were placed near landfills by the state, they scavenged from these rubbish dumps and went door to door, selling reusable goods to supplement their income. Recycling has become ‘hip’ and

has been introduced as though it is a new, revolutionary idea, Collins says, “but my people have been involved in recycling for centuries, but it was never validated or affirmed by the state or by the authorities.” Formalising these jobs or positions is not necessarily the way to go, as wealth then often goes to large corporations; incidentally, in the case of the Roma at Pata Rât, this is exactly what happened. Ensuring these communities get paid well for the environmental work they do is important.

Another example of responses from Traveller communities to the climate crisis is green social entrepreneurship. First Class Insulation is a company started by five Traveller men in Galway aimed at insulating homes, hence directly tackling the climate crisis. This project was supported by the local Galway Traveller Movement organisation, interested in stimulating the local Traveller economy.<sup>160</sup> Supporting local entrepreneurship in the green sector among racialised communities is thus a successful strategy. Nevertheless, overall, it is difficult for Travellers, who face so many hurdles in terms of accommodation, employment and the like, to seriously attend to climate disruption.

Lastly, Traveller organisations are starting to collaborate with climate organisations with positive experiences. Most recently, Pavee Point and the Irish Traveller Movement signed on to a shared vision for a Just Recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, which included various organisations beyond the Traveller Rights and climate spheres. The Donegal Travellers Project has also been successful in working together with other anti-racist organisations in the area to advocate as a block. Friel, who is the project’s Men’s Development and Health Worker, said this was very fruitful in terms of creating understanding and joint projects with other organisations to increase their impact.

<sup>157</sup> See <https://www.paveepoint.ie>

<sup>158</sup> “Dáil Éireann debate – Thursday, 13 Jun 1996, Vol. 466 No. 8: Report of Task Force on Travelling Community: Statements (Resumed),” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>159</sup> Independent Expert Group, “Traveller Accommodation Expert Review,” (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2019). See [here](#).

<sup>160</sup> Eric O’Brien, “Traveller Employment: The use of a social enterprise model as part of a strategy to create employment for Traveller men in West Cork,” *Critical Social Thinking*, Vol. 4, (UC Cork: Cork, 2012). See [here](#).



# Section 6: Migration And Precarity



**The vast majority of migration related to climate disruption happens within a country's borders, rendering people internally displaced.<sup>161</sup> Environmental disasters - a result of climate breakdown - accounted for 5.1 million internally displaced people in 2019, largely in Global South countries.<sup>162</sup> The UN's refugee agency is expecting the number of people displaced due to the climate crisis to significantly increase.<sup>163</sup> It is likely that more and more people will move to Europe from countries in the Global South that are highly vulnerable to climate change, because Europe's historical wealth accumulation through extraction from other parts of the world means that European nations are more equipped to deal with the climate crisis and its consequences. Simultaneously, Europe's border security market is anticipated to experience an annual growth of 15%, with a large expansion expected in biometrics and artificial intelligence (AI) markets.<sup>164</sup> Here, corporations play a role in "actively shap[ing] the policies from which they profit...", with large IT companies developing the EU's 'Smart Borders Package', national surveillance mechanisms and biometric databases, increasingly privatised migration retention and detention, as well as the use of commercial and charter flights for expulsion.<sup>165</sup> This shocking reality clearly highlights the (neo) colonial capitalist nature of this crisis, demonstrating a need for a divestment from the border-industrial complex and a complete system overhaul.**

In this section, we will address both refugees and migrant workers, many of whom are racialised as they enter Europe. We will attend to the conditions for forced displacement, the barriers to safe migration, and also the conditions that migrants encounter once they live in Europe.

It is an impossible task to disentangle economic reasons for moving from climate or environmental reasons if

you are a farmer battling drought, or a fisherman battling declining catchments. Gradual drivers of migration such as sea-level and temperature rise make it difficult to pinpoint climate as a cause. Similarly, political reasons for fleeing a region can be tied to environmental or climate-related issues, such as the conflict in Sudan that was in part caused by drought.<sup>166</sup> It is important here to ground the example of Sudan in its historical and political context, and to link the conditions of precarity with past colonial abuses and present (neo)colonial global policies and practices. To summarise, climate disruption remains an undeniable and crucial factor that contributes to migration, and (neo)colonial capitalist corporations continue to profit from this crisis that endangers the lives of racialised communities.

Beyond reasons for leaving, even the routes refugees and migrant workers take into Europe and within Europe are exposed to and impacted by climate disruption. In this section, we will first address Afghan refugees coming into Europe, largely to Greece, and the role climate plays in their fleeing Afghanistan and in their situation in Greece. Secondly, we attend to migrant workers from North Africa working in Spain in the agricultural sector, and how climate disruption impacts their living and working conditions.

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161 "Environmental Migration," Migration Data Portal, 27 October 2020. See [here](#).

162 "Global Report on Internal Displacement 2020," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, April 2020. See [here](#).

163 Tim Stickings "UN refugee agency 'preparing for thw worst' from climate change," *The National News*, (27 September 2021). See [here](#)

164 "Divestment from the border industrial complex could spur 'a politics that protects and upholds the rights of refugees and migrants'", Statewatch, April 2021. See [here](#).

165 "FINANCING BORDER WARDS The Border industry, its financiers and human rights," Transnational Institute, April 2021. See [here](#).

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166 Nhial Tiitmamer, "Resolving climate change-induced migration and conflict in South Sudan," *AfricaPortal*, 24 May 2020. See [here](#).

# From Afghanistan To Europe Through Greece: Climate Refugees?

Even if it is not the sole factor, climate disruption plays an ever more important role in people's decisions to flee their home countries, whether that be Sudan or Afghanistan.<sup>167</sup> In 2020, Afghans accounted for nearly 11% of first-time asylum applicants in the EU. In Greece particularly, one of the major entryways for those seeking asylum in Europe, 3 in 10 applicants come from Afghanistan.<sup>168</sup> This is the case despite the fact that the EU signed an agreement with Afghanistan in 2016, making it more difficult for Afghan asylum-seekers to gain status in the EU.<sup>169</sup> While many of these refugees are political refugees, climate disruption necessarily plays a role in the long-standing conflict in Afghanistan, and also in the complex reasons for why people leave the country. The camps that refugees are sent to once they arrive in Europe are also particularly exposed to climate disruption.

"If there is drought there is no production, and there is almost no import, so people die from hunger."

*Sorab, an Afghan who fled the country to the Netherlands in 1995*

## Climate and Food Insecurity

According to the ND-GAIN index, Afghanistan is one of the world's most climate-exposed countries, ranking 175 on a list of 181 countries.<sup>170</sup> Afghanistan's economy relies heavily on agriculture; over 60% of people derive some form of income from agriculture.<sup>171</sup> Pastoralism also features prominently, and nomadic pastoralists

like the Kuchis, who are dependent on good pastures for survival, are hit hard.<sup>172,173</sup>

"It rains less now, that I know from my family. Less rain, more heat. There is far less water. Sometimes people don't have enough."

*Bashir, an Afghan who fled to the Netherlands in 1997*

Conversely, in other areas, the accelerated melting of glaciers causes flooding and landslides, deadly to local inhabitants.<sup>174</sup> Increasing localised rainfall in the southern, arid provinces, is also a contributor.<sup>175</sup> Harvests are failing, worsening food insecurity for all. As farmers fall into financial trouble in regions like Bamiyan, some flee loan sharks whom they cannot repay or move for a better life.<sup>176</sup> The situation is only getting worse. Temperatures could rise by 2-3 Celsius by 2100, exacerbating the drought and flooding, and consequently increasing food insecurity.<sup>177</sup> In the wake of the harvest of 2017, one third of the population are facing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity, meaning that they have consumption gaps.<sup>178</sup>

## Climate Conflict

While conflict and war can be fed by climate disruption, they can affect more environmental and economic harm. Afghanistan has been in a state of war since the 1970s and has been hit by the environmental and

167 Andrej Přivara and Magdaléna Přivarová. "Nexus between Climate Change, Displacement and Conflict: Afghanistan Case." *Sustainability* 11.20 (2019): 5586. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11205586>

168 Eurostat, "Asylum statistics," European Commission, 24 March 2020. See [here](#).

169 "Joint Way Forward on migration issues between Afghanistan and the EU," European Union External Action, 4 October 2016. See [here](#).

170 "ND-GAIN: Rankings," University of Notre Dame, 2018. Accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

171 Leao, Izabela, Mansur Ahmed, and Anuja Kar. *Jobs from Agriculture in Afghanistan*. (The World Bank: Washington DC, 2018 doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-1265

172 "Climate change in Afghanistan: What does it mean for rural livelihoods and food security?" UN World Food Programme, 13 November 2016. See [here](#).

173 Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (2021) *Afghanistan | Humanitarian assistance to Kuchi nomadic pastoralists*. See [here](#)

174 "Climate change in Afghanistan: What does it mean for rural livelihoods and food security?" UN World Food Programme, 13 November 2016. See [here](#)

175 From interview with Bashir and Sorab.

176 Sophia Jones, "In Afghanistan, climate change complicates future prospects for peace," *National Geographic*, 3 February 2020. See [here](#).

177 "CLIMATE CHANGE AND GOVERNANCE IN AFGHANISTAN," National Environmental Protection Agency, NEPA, 2015. See [here](#).

178 Sophia Jones, "In Afghanistan, climate change complicates future prospects for peace," *National Geographic*, 3 February 2020. See [here](#).

economic consequences. Continual fighting has prevented robust economic activity for the benefit of the local population. Bombs, toxic chemicals, and other pollutants have contaminated the soils and rendered whole areas unusable for agriculture. Herders, like the Kuchi, used to migrate with their animals according to the seasons. This livelihood, similar to those of various Indigenous communities, has suffered.

"It used to be safe, but not anymore because of the war. Everywhere there are weapons and bombsh."  
*Bashir, an Afghan who fled to the Netherlands in 1997*

It is clear that climate disruption contributes to the decision of many Afghans to leave their homes for a better life. With food insecurity, drought, war, and limited opportunities for social and economic development in Afghanistan, it is no wonder that people are fleeing. It is important to note that these phenomena are inherently linked and cannot be considered as separate issues. The crisis in Afghanistan is a (neo)colonial capitalist crisis, with environmental, social, political, and economic implications.

Given that Euro-American corporations, militaries and populations are largely responsible for climate disruption, its states and institutions have a responsibility to provide homes for those displaced due to this disruption. (Neo)colonial capitalism ensures that negative impacts are exported to countries like Afghanistan, and that Europeans find this dynamic normal and acceptable.

## Who gets to be a Refugee?

Currently, it is difficult to seek asylum on the basis of climate disruption; under the 1951 Geneva Convention, asylum is offered for persons fearing political persecution, excluding climate-related reasons entirely.<sup>179</sup> While the European Union has frequently extended international protection on humanitarian grounds that stretch beyond persecution, and the concept of environmental and climate migration is deeply embedded in contemporary public discourse, these have yet to be included in the legal grounds for asylum, or other forms of international protection.<sup>180</sup> Nevertheless, civil society organisations working on refugee and migrant rights have been active in pushing for attention towards climate migration and the rights associated for people who are fleeing due to climate breakdown.

There are scholars calling for the European Union to reconsider their flexibility when interpreting Council Directives 2001/55/EC and 2011/95/EU, that could potentially allow asylum-seekers to seek refuge from disasters related to or induced by environmental changes.<sup>181,182</sup> For example, we argue that the terms 'max-influx' and 'displacement' in these directives could be re-interpreted, but rarely are. According to Beatriz Felipe Pérez, a researcher in the field of climate migration, it is a lack of political will that drives the disuse of the directives.<sup>183</sup> European countries are interested in keeping people out, not letting them in. The global border security market is booming, and Europe stands to gain financially by investing in border security technology, the detention and deportation business and audit and consultancy services.<sup>184,185</sup>

179 United National General Assembly (1951) *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. See [here](#).

180 Sumudu Anopama Atapattu, "A New Category of Refugees?: Climate refugees' and a gaping hole in international law," *Climate Refugees*. Routledge, 2018. 34-51.

181 "Council Directive 2001/55/EC," Official Journal of the European Communities, 20 July 2001. See [here](#).

182 "Council Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council," Official Journal of the European Union, 13 December 2011. See [here](#).

183 Pérez, Beatriz Felipe. "Beyond The Shortcomings of International Law: A proposal for the legal protection of climate migrants." *Climate Refugees*. Routledge, 2018. 214-229.

184 "Divestment from the border industrial complex could spur a politics that protects and upholds the rights of refugees and migrants", Statewatch, April 2021. See [here](#).

185 Emily Hush, "Developing a European Model of International Protection for Environmentally-Displaced Persons: Lessons from Finland and Sweden," *Columbia Journal of European Law*, 7 September 2017. See [here](#).

Nevertheless, expanding the definition of a refugee to include climate-related causes for migration is not a silver bullet. Much climate displacement is internal to nations, and communities do not want to leave their homes for Europe or elsewhere and become refugees in the process. Bashir indicated that most people do not have the means to leave Afghanistan; it is often those who have a little money at their disposal who can leave.

Witnesses, from various communities impacted by (neo) colonial capitalism, have asserted that their previous ways of life were often far more sustainable, before being brought to an end by imperialist wars. Part of anti-racist climate action is to listen to these communities and take strong measures to mitigate climate breakdown immediately, as well as ending wars such as the one in Afghanistan.

“Everyone here is looking for organic food, but in Afghanistan everything was organic.”  
*Bashir, an Afghan who fled to the Netherlands in 1997*

Migrant rights and refugee organisations have slowly brought more attention to the links between climate breakdown, conflict and migration. For example, the Greek Forum of Migrants<sup>186</sup> seized World Environment Day to do a short video campaign linking the two.<sup>187</sup> The topic gets a lot of attention on the international stage, including from the UN and the IOM, but thus far solutions have been conspicuous in their absence.

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<sup>186</sup> See [www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=English&type=index](http://www.migrant.gr/cgi-bin/pages/index.pl?arlang=English&type=index)

<sup>187</sup> Greek Forum of Migrants, “Climate change(d)... migration, too,” June 5, 2019. Video. Watch [here](#).

# Migrant Workers In Spain: Climate Disruption Breeds Precarity

Thousands of migrant workers from North Africa and Eastern Europe work in the agricultural industry in Spain, often undocumented.<sup>188,189</sup> Those from North Africa are racialised and come to Europe in search of a better life but especially for work that will pay them enough to support their families at home.<sup>190</sup> These families live in countries whose economies are frequently ravaged by colonial capitalism, particularly North African countries such as Morocco or Tunisia. Such workers often end up in Andalusia, in the south of Spain, picking strawberries and working in the greenhouses there,<sup>191</sup> or working on stone-fruit farms in the northeast of the country.<sup>192</sup>

The migrant workers labour to supply much of Europe with fruit and vegetables; according to Special Rapporteur Olivier de Schutter, two-thirds of the produce from Spanish greenhouses is sent to Europe and the UK.<sup>193</sup> These workers fill the labour gap in aging Western European populations;<sup>194</sup> in Spain, for example, there is a shortage of local workers willing to toil in the agricultural sector.<sup>195</sup> The migrant workers often live in terrible conditions similar to those in the refugee camps mentioned above, or of the Roma communities near hazardous sites. Whatever continent racialised people are on, they cannot seem to escape (neo)colonial extractivism, whether it is of their resources or of their labour.

## Climate, Drought and Precarity

Climate disruption further complicates the issue of exploited migrant workers, as water is already hard to come by, and climate breakdown and the local

agricultural industry is making this worse. The water table and the wetlands in the region are drying up. The Andalusian region in the south is particularly vulnerable to rising temperatures as well, and drought is therefore increasingly common.<sup>196,197,198</sup>

“The strawberry industry is completely decimating the natural resources in the area, it has impacted the aquifers. They create illegal wells to dig up more water to use it for the harvest. In a few years, the situation is going to get really complicated.”

*Ana Pinto, an agricultural worker in Huelva who is part of the anti-racist workers' collective Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha.<sup>199</sup>*

This means that there is less water not only for agriculture, but also for the migrant workers and other local communities. The industry continues to clear land for their monoculture, however. Such a dynamic is part of the (neo) colonial capitalism of the agricultural system; the ‘fruits’ of the exploitation of racialised workers and local land that is degrading, is exported to other parts of Europe to be enjoyed there. It does not stop, despite human rights abuses.

Many of the economies of countries where these workers come from are also impacted by climate disruption.

188 Ofelia de Pablo et al., “We pick your food’: migrant workers speak out from Spain’s ‘Plastic Sea,’” 20 September 2020. See [here](#).

189 Emma Wallis, “Forgotten migrant workers in Southern Spain speak out about conditions,” *Infomigrants*, 30 September 2020. See [here](#).

190 Felicity Lawrence et al., “Salad slaves: Who really provides our vegetables – video,” *the Guardian*, 7 February 2011. Watch [here](#).

191 Sara Martínez, “Case Study: African Migrants in the Strawberry Fields and Greenhouses of Spain during the Pandemic,” *Verité*, 23 June 2020. See [here](#).

192 Alfonso L. Congostrina, “Fruit pickers on Spain’s coronavirus outbreak: ‘What terrifies me is not being able to feed my children,’” *El País*, 25 June 2020. See [here](#).

193 “Supermarkets call on Spanish Government to act,” *Ethical Consumer*, 187 (Nov/Dec 2020): 8. See [here](#).

194 Heinz Fassmann and Wiebke Sievers, “Introduction,” in *Migration from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe*. (Amsterdam UP: Amsterdam, 2014). See [here](#).

195 Rosa Front, “Huelva no tiene quien recoja la fresa pese a contra con 9.000 parados en el campo,” *ABC Sociedad*, 6 November 2019. See [here](#).

196 Jiménez-Donaire, María del Pilar, Juan Vicente Giráldez, and Tom Vanwallegem. “Impact of Climate Change on Agricultural Droughts in Spain.” *Water* 12.11 (2020): 3214. <https://doi.org/10.3390/w12113214>

197 Javier Martín-Arroyo, “Un territorio que se asoma al abismo climático,” *El País*, 27 February 2020. See [here](#).

198 “Precipitación: Sequía,” Junta de Andalucía, accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

199 See: <https://www.facebook.com/Jornaleras-de-Huelva-en-lucha-110172797198003/>

Morocco and Tunisia are enduring increasing drought, and the agricultural sector there is suffering. The routes that migrants take into the Europe, over sea, are increasingly precarious due to climate disruption.<sup>200</sup> Within Spain, these workers often follow the harvests from region to region,<sup>201</sup> and wherever they end up, they are relatively exposed to climate disruption. In other words, the climate crisis reinforces on the exposure and exploitation that these workers have already endured due to (neo)colonial wealth extraction.

Without colonialism, the countries where these workers come from may have lived and worked in thriving economies at home. The structure of (neo)colonial capitalism persists, continuing to bleed these countries dry of resources and opportunities. For example, in Tunisia, transnational companies supply much of the domestic gas,<sup>202</sup> sending profits abroad. The lack of wealth and opportunities are part of the reason why migrants seek work in Europe.<sup>203</sup> Once in Europe, states often deny them documents and rights, supporting companies in exploiting them even further. The race to the bottom in terms of food prices means that farmers have to sell their fruit at artificially low prices, which translates into very low pay for workers. A reform of the entire agricultural system is necessary.

"If you don't want to work 12 hours, you can leave. If you don't want 30 euros a day, you can leave."<sup>205</sup>

*Mamadou Serigne, a Senegalese migrant labourer*

200 From interview with Beatriz Felipe Pérez.

201 Bala Chambers, "From undocumented migrant to anti-far-right activist in Spain," *TRT World*, 28 June 2020. See [here](#).

202 Hamza Hamouchene, "Extractivism and Resistance in North Africa," (the Transnational Institute: Amsterdam, October 2019). See [here](#).

203 Michele LeVoy, Nele Verbruggen, and Johan Wets, "Undocumented migrant workers in Europe, PICUM, Brüssel," *Migration and Illegality in Germany—AKI Research Review 1* (2004): 91. See [here](#).

## Undocumented and Exploited

While the working conditions are similar for North African, Eastern European and Spanish workers, many of the North African climate migrants are also undocumented, and this can lead to several violations of their fundamental rights in the Spanish labour market, meaning that they are far more exposed to being taken advantage of by employers in the industry. Without contracts that stipulate their rights - to adequate working conditions and medical support, for example - and mechanisms to safeguard them, the situation for these workers can be likened to that of modern slavery. Those who do have contracts are only marginally more protected. While in theory they have the right to medical support through their contracts, they are often denied this, either by the companies they work for or the healthcare services.<sup>205</sup>

The plastic sea of tents, known as chabolas,<sup>206</sup> that many undocumented migrant workers are forced to live in get exceedingly hot in the summer, and the density of the tents and the scrap materials they are made of are tinderbox; leading to a fire in Huelva, Andalusia, in October 2019.<sup>207</sup> Some of the labourers surmised that this was set off on purpose by local developers aiming to set up a shopping mall nearby, which is reminiscent of the situation in Pata Rât. Again, these fires and toxic air pollutants will get even worse as temperatures continue to rise with climate breakdown. Increasingly variable weather patterns also allow disease to spread more easily, which again hits workers with little running water and poor sanitation hardest.<sup>208</sup> To add insult to injury, the migrant workers are often required to pay rent for these facilities.<sup>209</sup>

204 "Paco León + Serigne Mamadou | Casa Nosta, Casta Vostra," Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra, 27 May 2020. Video. Watch [here](#).

205 From interview with Ana Pinto.

206 Felicity Lawrence et al, "Salad slaves: Who really provides our vegetables - video," *the Guardian*, 7 February 2011. Watch [here](#).

207 "Largest migrant temp camp in Spanish, municipality of Lepe burned down," *Fresh Plaza*, 28 October 2019. See [here](#).

208 "Paco León + Serigne Mamadou | Casa Nosta, Casta Vostra," Casa Nostra, Casa Vostra, 27 May 2020. Video. Watch [here](#).

209 From interview with Ana Pinto.

"Some workers have to walk 7 or 8 kilometres just to get to the closest towns where they can buy food. Some people do not have running water, and the cooking and sanitation facilities are poor, sometimes you have one bathroom for 12 people."  
*Ana Pinto, an agricultural worker in Huelva who is part of the anti-racist workers' collective Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha.*<sup>110</sup>

## Community Mobilisation

Given their precarious situation, climate migrants working in Spain do not have much access to decision-making power. However, there are a number of collectives of migrant workers who are advocating for their rights, including Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha<sup>211</sup> (Women Workers of Huelva in Struggle) in Huelva, Andalusia, Colectiva Trabajadores Africanos<sup>212</sup> (Collective of African Workers) also in the South of Spain and la Plataforma Fruita amb Justícia Social<sup>213</sup> (Platform Fruits and Social Justice) in Catalonia.

Jornaleras de Huelva en Lucha has brought several court cases against the agricultural companies who force these climate migrants to live and work in such conditions. They also try to 'name and shame' these companies on social media platforms such as Facebook, finding that this is more effective. "The courts don't really care, they're not there to actually defend workers, especially migrant workers. Often these companies only care about their image and their products, so precisely doing this public calling out has been the way that we've gained the most rights for workers," says Ana.

There have also been regular demonstrations by organisations such as Colectiva de Trabajadores Africanos<sup>214</sup>, as well as la Plataforma Fruita amb Justícia Social.<sup>215</sup> They have been supported by campaigns such as Regularizacion Ya!,<sup>216</sup> which advocates for documentation for these workers beyond contracts, so that they can gain access to healthcare and other human needs and rights. Amigos de la Tierra<sup>217</sup> is also advocating for a **more local food system**, rather than being the fruit basket of Europe. This would mean that the **competition for lower prices would decrease**, and larger companies may not have such a handle on the sector, improving labour conditions. The drought problems may decrease as less water would be needed to produce for other countries.

210 See: <https://www.facebook.com/Jornaleras-de-Huelva-en-lucha-110172797198003/>

211 See <https://jornalerasenlucha.org>

212 See: <https://www.facebook.com/colectivade.trabajadoresmigrantes>

213 See: <https://frutaambjusticia.wordpress.com/>

214 See <https://es-es.facebook.com/colectivade.trabajadoresmigrantes>

215 See [www.frutaambjusticia.cat](http://www.frutaambjusticia.cat)

216 See: <https://regularizacionya.com/>

217 See: <https://www.tierra.org/01agricultura-y-alimentacion/01campanas-agricultura/>



# Section 7: The Racist Right-Wing

And The Mainstream  
Climate Movement



**The rise of the far-right is synonymous with a rise in racism in Europe, and elsewhere. Far-right ideologies support white supremacist, xenophobic ideas, in part to prevent third country nationals from entering the region. Most far-right groups are also climate sceptics or downright denialist.<sup>218</sup> However, we are witnessing the mainstreaming of eco-fascist narratives which weaponise the fight against climate breakdown, and the importance of environmental preservation, in order to push their hostile environment agenda. Hilary Moore and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung published a report in March 2020, analysing racist right-wing climate politics in Europe.<sup>219</sup> They concluded that whatever the position of these groups, they impact the intersections of climate, migration and racist discourse in Europe, and may trickle down into the mainstream.**

In recent years, the debate within the mainstream climate movement in Europe has been growing about whether racial justice and 'other issues' should be included within the larger narrative.<sup>220,221</sup> These conversations vary greatly depending on the country and the organisation. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that even though the climate movement is a largely left-wing movement, the reality is

that conversations about (anti)racism, the (neo)colonial dynamics of the climate crisis and what justice looks like in this context are still missing. We know that climate justice cannot be achieved without justice and liberation for all, but we unfortunately witness within mainstream climate justice movements a wilful ignorance about how racism operates, both within their groups, and on a systemic level.<sup>222</sup>

The isolation of climate justice narratives from the struggles for other forms of social justice leaves the climate movement in Europe vulnerable to co-optation by racist right-wing narratives.<sup>223</sup> By side-lining racialised voices from their discussions, they also systematically exclude racialised communities from the movement which can result in practices and campaigns that are actively harmful.<sup>224</sup> Thus, the movement reproduces (neo)colonial dynamics. This section will discuss the impacts of the racist right-wing on climate narratives, and how this manifests in the predominantly white climate movement. Given the range of far-right, populist right, eco-nationalists and the like that inhabit this spectrum, we use the term 'racist right,' borrowed from Moore to refer to right-wing groups which have racist ideologies.

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218 "Climate change denial strongly linked to right-wing nationalism," *Chalmers*, 21 May 2021. See [here](#).

219 Hilary Moore, "Burning Earth, Changing Europe: How the racist right exploits the climate crisis – and what we can do about it," (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Brussels, 6 March 2020). See [here](#).

220 "Whose lives, whose profits? Why climate activism and anti-racism go hand in hand," *Code Rood*, 8 April 2020. See [here](#).

221 Tonny Nowshin, "Die gleiche Wurzel," *Taz.de*, 25 June 2020. See [here](#).

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222 From interviews with Talissa Soto, Rebecca Abena Kennedy-Asante, Kahina Rabahi.

223 Hilary Moore, "Burning Earth, Changing Europe: How the racist right exploits the climate crisis – and what we can do about it," (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung: Brussels, 6 March 2020). See [here](#).

224 Leah Cowan, "Are Extinction Rebellion whitewashing climate justice?" *gal-dem*, 18 April 2019. See [here](#).

# The Racist Right-Wing And Climate

No matter what the position of the racist right on climate, it is important to pay close attention. They consistently scapegoat migrants and racialised communities and may use the climate crisis strategically to continue doing so, blaming them for environmental ills. There is, in other words, a fight emerging to 'own' climate and environmental politics. The left has a large head start, but Moore deems it likely that we will start to see a stronger white supremacist, right-wing discourse on climate emerging as public concerns about climate disruption heighten.

There are numerous strands of racist right-wing ideology, and how they co-opt climate politics. While we cannot cover all of them, we highlight two cases here to highlight the dangers involved. We will address the development of eco-fascism in Europe. Then we will examine Hungary, which under Viktor Orbán and his far-right party Fidesz, has slid into a racist, anti-democratic regime while still prioritising combating climate disruption.

## Eco-Fascism: modern developments

Eco-fascist ideas predate the Nazi era in Germany, but the Nazi's National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) was a key player in developing these ideas. There are a few central tenets. The 'blood and soil' doctrine is one that links a particular, white Aryan race, to the land, in a somewhat mystical way.<sup>225</sup> Other groups, most notably Jews, are not rooted in this land, and thus do not hold a claim to it. Note that many Indigenous communities also have a strong relationship to land and environment, but do not place themselves above other groups in doing so or justify genocide in this way. This 'blood and soil' doctrine allowed Nazis to justify colonial land-grabs for Lebensraum.<sup>226</sup> This tenet, combined with an authoritarian outlook, is what is known as eco-fascism.

Of course, the ideology has been revised since then, but the original tenets stand. In Italy, the neo-fascist CasaPound movement has an environmental branch

that has not said much about climate, but is involved in reforestation, forest preservation and animal rights. They have a decidedly Identitarian approach. "Defend our forests, our roots, our future," begins one public statement, leaving little doubt whose forests and futures they are referring to as well as whom they perceive to be the threat.<sup>227</sup> The core CasaPound group is militant in their anti-immigration stance.<sup>228</sup> They won a seat in the council of one of Rome's largest neighbourhoods in the 2017 elections,<sup>229</sup> and violently protested against Roma being housed in a Rome neighbourhood, successfully keeping them out.<sup>230</sup> This subverts the impression that fascists are always on the margins; they are starting to pose a real threat, often under the guise of environmental protection.

Another eco-fascist narrative perpetuated by the racist right-wing is that climate degradation is due to the very existence of Black and Brown people, who are overpopulating, draining finite resources, too industrialised and migrating to the global North. Narratives that point to population control as a solution for the climate crisis are racist and eco-fascist.<sup>231</sup> Not only does this discourse support terrible (neo)colonial practices such as forced sterilisation, but it is factually inaccurate, as we know that the primary causes for climate degradation are at home in the global North.<sup>232</sup>

## Hungary: Right-wing climate politics and great replacement theory

In Hungary, Orbán and the Fidesz political party have vacillated in their stances towards climate disruption, often taking positions based on financial advantages they perceive available from the EU. While they have rarely undertaken much domestically in terms of climate and environmental policy, in January 2020 they

225 Peter Staudenmaier. "Fascist Ecology: The "Green Wing" of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents." (2011). See [here](#).

226 Peter Staudenmaier. "Fascist Ecology: The "Green Wing" of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents." (2011). See [here](#).

227 "La foresta ache avanza" pianta alberi in tutta Italia," *CasaPound Italia*, 21 November 2019. See [here](#).

228 Tobias Jones, "The fascist movement that has brought Mussolini back to the mainstream," *the Guardian*, 22 February 2018. See [here](#).

229 Isla Binnie, "Italy's far-right makes inroads locally as nation frets about fascism," *Reuters*, 20 November 2017. See [here](#).

230 Lorenzo Tondo, "Neo-fascist violence keeps Roma out of Rome neighbourhood," *the Guardian*, 3 April 2019. See [here](#).

231 Francisca Rockey, "The dangers of eco-fascism and why it's a 'veneer for racist beliefs,'" *Euronews*, 21 March 2021. See [here](#).

232 Francisca Rockey, "The dangers of eco-fascism and why it's a 'veneer for racist beliefs,'" *Euronews*, 21 March 2021. See [here](#).

**unveiled a new National Energy and Climate Plan, with a 'Christian-Democratic' approach.<sup>233</sup> This plan is a clear response to voters increasing concern about climate disruption.<sup>234,235</sup> Right-wing parties find themselves fighting for the vote against left-wing, green parties, and hence Orbán aims to build up right-wing environmental and climate politics.<sup>236</sup>**

Orbán's party, Fidesz, is known for its racist and anti-immigration stances, targeting Roma and Muslims in particular.<sup>237</sup> As a promoter of the great replacement theory,<sup>238,239</sup> which suggests that white people will be replaced by people of colour or racialised people, Orbán has pushed for higher birth rates in Hungary to combat this and offered financial incentives to boost birth rates.<sup>240</sup> With the announcement of the National Energy and Climate Plan, the Hungarian secretary of environment stated, "Conserving nature for our children and grandchildren can be imagined as conserving something that was created by God."<sup>241</sup> It is hardly debatable which children and which lives he was referring to; certainly not Roma or immigrant children.

These racist, seemingly environmentalist ideas seep into the more mainstream right-wing. European leaders like Macron have cited so-called overpopulation as the problem holding back progress in African and other Global South nations on climate and development. In doing so, they reproduce colonial dynamics in multiple ways. They cast themselves as civilised as their own population is seemingly under control, and frame themselves as solution-oriented on the climate front. The accusation of overpopulation nevertheless holds echoes of the racist great replacement theory, and the colonial notion of being able to dictate to Global South countries what their problems are. Moreover, global North countries in Europe and beyond still have much higher levels of emissions and general consumption as compared to Global South nations and are conveniently pawning off responsibility to avoid sacrificing their own budgets and ways of life to support a just transition. Recently, the COVID pandemic has brought rhetoric about the virus being the 'cure' and people being the 'virus,' which invokes 'survival of the fittest' ideas. Just like in the climate crisis, the first victims of the COVID crisis are the marginalised, including racialised communities.

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233 AFP, "Hungary unveils 'Christian democratic'-based climate strategy," *France 24*, 16 January 2020. See [here](#).

234 "Vast majority of Hungarians think that we should be more concerned with climate change," *DemNet*, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

235 Ábrahám Vass, "Eurobarometer: Climate Change Priority for Hungarians too," *Hungary today*, 3 December 2019. See [here](#).

236 Kafkadesk, "Hungary: Orban goes green on climate change as long as it remains 'Christian-democratic,'" *Kafkadesk*, 21 January 2020. See [here](#).

237 Thomas Escritt, "Hungary's minorities bear brunt of anti-migrant rhetoric," *Reuters*, 1 October 2015. See [here](#).

238 Shaun Walker, "Viktor Orbán trumpets Hungary's 'procreation, not immigration' policy," *the Guardian*, 6 September 2019. See [here](#).

239 Péter Sárosi, "The Great Replacement: A Conspiracy Theory Shared by the churchTerrorist and Orban's Government," *Autocracy Analyst*, 28 August 2020. See [here](#).

240 Nick Thorpe, "Hungary tries for baby boom with tax breaks and loan forgiveness," *BBC News*, 11 February 2019. See [here](#).

241 Kafkadesk, "Hungary: Orban goes green on climate change as long as it remains 'Christian-democratic,'" *Kafkadesk*, 21 January 2020. See [here](#).

# Colourblindness And The Mainstream Climate Movement

## Mainstream climate movements in Europe are largely ignorant of two things:

1. Their own colonial history and how it ties into the climate crisis, and

2. The history of environmentalism in Europe, and in particular the part that is rooted in Nazi thought.

It is no wonder then, that there is a colonial, 'white-centric' approach to the climate crisis. All too often, we hear that we are doing all of this 'for our children,'<sup>242</sup> without any acknowledgement that racialised communities are being threatened right now. There is minimal talk of whose fault the climate crisis truly is, and that we are a part of a larger, extractive colonial-capitalist system. Instead, dominant discourse all too often suggests that everyone is equally responsible for the crisis at hand. There is also little attention paid to how members of racialised communities feel when coming into predominantly white climate spaces, with very little awareness of racism at the interpersonal level.<sup>243</sup> While these are generalisations, they are recurrent concepts in the interviews conducted.

Frequently, scapegoating of racialised communities occurs within the climate and environmental movement. Migrants who take flights to see their families get blamed for the climate crisis,<sup>244</sup> and Muslims are singled out for halal slaughtering methods.<sup>245</sup> This happens at a movement-level, as well as in green political parties. Climate justice narratives are also often highly moralising, blaming individuals and demanding that they take responsibility for systemic issues. This often ends in racialised people, migrants and poor people being demonised for a crisis they have not caused. In this way, these racist right-wing narratives seep into climate and environmental

movements that are ignorant of, and therefore not committed to, decolonising and anti-racist approaches. Additionally, immigrants are often accused of not knowing as much about environmentalism, and therefore need to be educated.

This is part of white supremacy. The idea that 'western' or 'global North' societies know best in the environmental department stands in stark contrast to the seismic scale of emissions they have caused, the serious degradation of soil and environments due to industrial agriculture and other problems that are founded on colonial capitalism. Additionally, these accusations are often from groups and people that lack any kind of systemic analysis, and individualise the climate crisis, to the most exposed.

When challenged on these ideas, many white climate activists, and the groups they belong to, respond in a fragile way, asserting that racism and climate are not linked, and that we lose people from the movement if we continue to talk about such a 'contentious' issue. Again, it is evident which lives and whose membership is relevant here; white membership is privileged over creating safer spaces for racialised communities. These dynamics have slowly changed over the years, thanks to various racialised people organising in the climate space, as well as climate organisations who are working on their own knowledge and collaborations with anti-racist organisations. These responses are detailed under the 'responses' section, but despite these efforts, there remains a long way to go.

242 Damien Gayle, "Police attempt to clear Extinction Rebellion protest camps in London," *the Guardian*, 8 October 2019. See [here](#).

243 Interview with Talissa Soto, Rebecca-Abena Kennedy-Asante, Kahina Rabahi.

244 Ajit Niranjana, "Flight shame: Climate-conscious migrants face environmental dilemma," *Deutsche Welle*, 22 November 2019. See [here](#).

245 Robin Goudsmit, "Partij voor de Dieren wil onverdoofde rituele slacht alsnog verbieden," *Trouw*, 25 September 2019. See [here](#).

# Section 8: A Few Notes

On Pandemics And  
The Climate Crisis



In the course of this research, many interviewees mentioned the COVID-19 crisis and its incredible impact on their communities. From Irish Travellers to migrant workers in Spain, access to utilities, healthcare and information is heavily jeopardised. Scientists have long-warned about the fact that the climate crisis - with its warming temperatures, rising sea-levels and significant precipitation events and animals' loss of habitat - will cause the spread of infectious diseases, like COVID-19.<sup>246</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic is yet more evidence that crises impact racialised and other marginalised communities adversely. Structural racism, in terms of access to housing, healthcare and a source of income, have all contributed to marginalising racialised communities further during the pandemic.<sup>247</sup> So, as pandemics are increasingly likely to occur as climate disruption ensues, and our wildlife is irrevocably lost to temperature rises, drought and other related problems, viruses and diseases will become rampant.<sup>248</sup> **Racialised communities will bear the brunt of new diseases and all the fallout they bring with them, if we continue to let the climate crisis run its course.**



<sup>246</sup> Lara Skinner, "What's the Connection between COVID-19 and Climate Change? Inequality," *ILR School*, 8 July 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>247</sup> "Covid-19 impact on racialised communities: interactive EU-wide map," *European Network Against Racism*, 12 May 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>248</sup> Barney Jeffries, "The Loss of Nature and the Rise of Pandemics: Protecting human and planetary health," (World Wildlife Fund: Italy, March 2020). See [here](#).

# Section 9: Decolonising Responses

To The Climate Crisis:  
Better Practices From Existing  
Community Organising





While racialised communities' responses to the climate crisis have been discussed in each case above, there are more general responses from these communities in Europe that we can learn much from.

Below are three forms of responses, as well as examples, of how to take action and lessons learned from these responses.

## 1. Anti-racist and decolonising climate groups started by members of racialised communities across Europe

*References:* Black Earth Kollektiv (Germany),<sup>249</sup> Climate Liberation Bloc (the Netherlands),<sup>250</sup> Wretched of the Earth (the UK).<sup>251</sup>

*Concept:* These are collective response to white dominance within climate groups, both in terms of numbers and in terms of narrative. These actions aim to shift these narratives to a justice-centred, decolonising approach to the climate crisis, and centre racialised voices. They create safer spaces for racialised people to develop their ideas on how to tackle the climate crisis and to take action, as well as heal. **These goals arose out of the needs that racialised people felt while organising within largely white climate organisations and movements.**

*Principles, practices and actions from these groups:*<sup>252</sup>

- **Solidarity actions with Global South and Indigenous groups.** The Black Earth Kollektiv raises money in Germany, a former colonial power in the global North, and sends these to climate and environmental groups led by racialised communities in the Global South.

- **Raising racialised voices and modes of work up in the climate movement.** Showcasing racialised people in Europe who are taking anti-racist and decolonising approaches is an important part of the work that these groups do, in panels, workshops and the like.
- **Action trainings and hosting spaces for only racialised or marginalised communities.** The Black Earth Collective has organised climbing trainings for direct action for FLINT\* (women, lesbian, intersex, non-binary and trans\*) groups, which could also be organised for racialised communities.
- **Trainings for largely white climate organisations looking to take justice-based and decolonising approaches.** This has been a running thread for various groups such as CLuB, and is often an opportunity to get paid for knowledge accrued over a long period of time. However, groups have vacillated about this being a central part of their work, preferring to advance their own work and communities as opposed to prioritising white-dominated organisations.
- **Organising blocks or events within larger climate-related or anti-racist demonstrations to bring the two issues together.** CLuB has organised many blocks within larger climate demonstrations within the Netherlands, which had been successful. This model could be adapted to other events and situations.

## 2. Collaborations between climate and anti-racist organisations

*References:* Friends of the Earth Ireland & Traveller groups (Ireland),<sup>253</sup> Greenpeace & Sami communities (Norway).<sup>254</sup>

*Concept:* The anti-racist and decolonising climate groups mentioned above are also well-positioned to bring various groups together.

249 See [www.blackearthkollektiv.org](http://www.blackearthkollektiv.org)

250 See [Climate Liberation Bloc / CLuB | Facebook](#)

251 See [www.facebook.com/wotearth/](http://www.facebook.com/wotearth/)

252 These were derived from interviews with Talissa Soto, Rebecca Abena Kennedy-Asante, Kahina Rabahi and Élodie Nace unless otherwise stated.

253 "A Shared Vision for a Just Recovery," Friends of the Earth Ireland, 19 October 2020. See [here](#).

254 Greenpeace International, "Sámi reindeer herders oppose an industrial railway cutting through their land," *Greenpeace*, 28 February 2019. See [here](#).

*Principles, practices and actions from these collaborations:*<sup>255</sup>

- **Approach these collaborations on your own terms as an anti-racist organisation.** Determine in advance the justice-based and decolonising approach you would like to take, and then approach climate organisations, to avoid creeping away from these central tenets.
- **Seek out organisations that have justice-based approaches to the climate crisis and have some knowledge of anti-racism.** Experience tells us that collaborations with organisations that are not open to these approaches, and do not have a basic understanding of anti-racism, are very frustrating to work with and is an exercise in course correction instead of true progress.
- **Take time to get to know each other as the collaboration progresses.** Central principles and tenets, whether these are decision-making principles or punctuality, and rigour may differ. In order to truly decolonise these collaborations and base them on trust and just principles, time is necessary to get to know each other and build a container with principles and expectations both parties abide by. Social interactions included.

### 3. Religious and faith-based groups are forming their own responses.

#### Religious and faith-based groups

*References:* European Network on Religion and Belief (Europe-wide),<sup>256</sup> Green Muslims<sup>257</sup> & Greenfaith (the Netherlands),<sup>258</sup>

*Concept:* Religious groups such as Jews or Muslims are often racialised in the European context.<sup>259</sup> They are also often written off as politically irrelevant in the climate crisis,

as there is a sense that all response to the crisis should be secular. There are grassroots organisations that are developing environmental and climate action through the lens of their faith. **Faith-based environmental organisations that take an explicitly anti-racist approach should be supported and welcomed as a decolonising force.**

- There are grassroots organisations that are developing environmental and climate action through the lens of their faith. These include the Groene Moslims<sup>260</sup> in the Netherlands, and Greenfaith,<sup>261</sup> an international multi-faith organisation aiming to mobilise people on environmental issues through their faith. Faith-based environmental organisations that take an explicitly anti-racist approach should be supported and welcomed as a decolonising force.
- Part of moving away from the (neo)colonial capitalist ideal of homo economicus is to acknowledge that there will be a diversity of approaches to the climate crisis, that are not always driven by Western, scientific thought. **Religious motivations to fight for climate justice are as valid as other, non-religious motivations.**

"The fact of the matter is that many people are motivated by religious belief."

*Kahina Rabahi, former Director of the European Network on Religion and Belief.*

<sup>255</sup> These were derived from interviews with Talissa Soto, Rebecca Abena Kennedy-Asante, Kahina Rabahi and Élodie Nace unless otherwise stated.

<sup>256</sup> ENORB – [European Network on Religion and Belief](https://www.groenemoslims.nl/)

<sup>257</sup> See: <https://www.groenemoslims.nl/>

<sup>258</sup> See: <https://greenfaith.org/>

<sup>259</sup> Nasar Meer, "Racialization and religion: race, culture and difference in the study of antisemitism and Islamophobia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36.3 (2013): 385-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.734392>

<sup>260</sup> See: <https://www.groenemoslims.nl/>

<sup>261</sup> See: <https://greenfaith.org/>

# Section 10: Access To Decision-Making

From National Transitions To  
The European Green Deal



**In the various cases covered, it is clear that while there are differences in the access to decision-making that racialised communities have, the general trend is one of exclusion. At best they are forgotten or marginally included, at worst actively oppressed and attacked by authorities. Here we attend to major developments in climate policy at both national and European levels. These will certainly impact racialised communities; the question is, how.**

Such policy packages are opportunities to radically change these communities' access to decision-making and to decolonise how we deal with the climate crisis. In this section, we deal with the Scottish Just Transition Commission and the European Green Deal, both intended to introduce equitable climate policy. Nevertheless, there is little indication that these committees and policy proposals meaningfully include racialised communities. We provide recommendations on both the process of drawing the proposals up as well as the policy content, in order to decolonise these institutions and packages to make them truly emancipatory for all. While the recommendations deal with these specific packages, these are relevant for new packages being drawn up.

# SCOTLAND: THE JUST TRANSITION COMMISSION

The Scottish government launched the Just Transition Commission in 2019 to advise the government on how to transition to “a net-zero economy that is fair to all”, by 2045.<sup>262</sup> The Commission looks at the entire economy and the impacts of an energy and emissions transition, instead of simply the fossil fuel sector. This is a relatively novel approach as compared to other European nations. The Commission is expected to release their advisory report early in 2021. Thus far we have the following observations about the process, based on the interim report.<sup>263</sup> These provide insights not only for the Scottish Commission but also more generally, for other plans on the national or municipal level.

- **The target needs to be more ambitious for racialised communities to be able to survive the climate crisis.** A net-zero economy by 2045, the current goal of the Commission, is not an adequate goal. Countries in the Global South like Afghanistan are already feeling the impacts of climate disruption deeply; we need to achieve full decarbonisation and sooner.
- **Achieving justice for racialised communities must be mentioned.** While the documents the commission has released thus far do talk about “improving social equality,”<sup>264</sup> there is little talk about race or ethnic background, if any at all. If these communities are not explicitly mentioned, they are often left out entirely.

- **There must be members of the Commission who have explicit experience in racial justice and decolonisation questions.** To truly create a just transition, the Commission must also be comprised of the relevant expertise.
- **The Commission must engage pro-actively with racialised communities throughout the development of their plan.** While the interim report mentioned engagement with communities, these were not specified and examples were limited to towns and areas with links to the fossil fuel industry. Moreover, campaigners have indicated that the Commission is approachable but does not actively approach communities. They need to be pro-active in doing so, as many racialised communities do not have the contacts and the resources to push for their own inclusion.

<sup>262</sup> “Just Transition Commission,” *Scottish Government*, accessed on 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>263</sup> “Just Transition Commission Interim Report,” *Scottish Government*, 27 February 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>264</sup> “Just Transitions: a comparative perspective,” *Scottish Government*, 25 August 2020. See [here](#).

# THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

The European Green Deal (EGD) is the European Union's "plan to make the EU's economy sustainable."<sup>265</sup> It was launched at the end of 2019, encompassing a Just Transition and a few other topics. Nevertheless, members of Friends of the Earth Europe indicate, "Current patterns in the Council, Commission and Parliament risk replicating exploitative and oppressive structures where people of colour are not heard nor properly represented... the EU has a lot of work to do to make sure it is more diverse and inclusive".<sup>266</sup>

While the EGD is broad in its approach, tackling agriculture, a circular economy, biodiversity, energy and several other aspects, it fares worse than the Scottish plan in terms of centring justice or equity. There is no mention of justice or racialised communities in the policy documents. Given the EGD's scope it is difficult to address all sectors. Nevertheless, we offer multiple content recommendations towards decolonising the EGD, based on the current documents:

- **The capitalist underpinnings of the EGD mean that racialised communities in Europe are likely to continue to be exploited.** Migrant workers in Spain are unlikely to benefit from the Farm to Fork or Sustainable Agriculture strategies. There is little to nothing about fair wages and documentation for the workers who prop up the agricultural industry. These are central to the industry's sustainability.
- **Climate-neutral for whom? Climate-neutrality by 2050 does not protect racialised communities from exposure to climate disruption.** Again, the target is not ambitious enough, and sets too low a bar both in terms of the timeline and the term 'climate-neutrality.' A full stop on emissions is required as soon as possible to protect racialised communities.
- **Mention of equity and justice is missing.** While these may simply be rhetorical tools, they steer policy in the direction of equity. This is currently missing, with a large focus on the growth of the economy and the environment.
- **The EGD should include reparations to racialised communities, particularly in the Global South and in formerly colonised regions.** Racialised communities are feeling the effects of climate disruption now, as a result of colonial capitalism. Reparations for historical wrongs as well as climate debt should be paid by European nations.
- **The focus on the digitalisation of the economy will further dispossess Indigenous and racialised communities if mining of rare earth metals is not addressed.** The digitalisation of the economy means many racialised and Indigenous communities, including the Inuit and the Sámi, will face increased mining for rare earth metals on their lands, with all the associated ill-effects on their health, culture, and livelihoods.
- **Stop Investor State Dispute Settlements (ISDS) as part of the EGD.** ISDS laws allow corporations to sue states outside of domestic courts for limiting their profits, and this allows corporations to continue 'business as usual;' the laws facilitate the exploitation of communities, particularly in the Global South.<sup>267,268</sup>
- **Allowances for climate refugees should be included. There is no mention of climate-related migration.** Opening borders, especially to climate refugees and migrants, must be included in the EGD to support victims of the climate disruption the EU has played a significant role in causing.
- **Utility poverty must be addressed specifically in the context of racialised communities and particular cultural circumstances.** Travellers, Roma, refugees, and migrant communities deserve access to heating and electricity, but also to water, which is often left out. Culturally appropriate accommodation and relevant adaptations are a part of decolonising the EGD.
- **Ensure the implementation of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025 by racial mainstreaming in the European Green Deal,** by auditing measures to ensure they are considering the situation of racialised communities, and driving equity for all rather than contributing to their exclusion.

<sup>265</sup> "A European Green Deal," *European Commission*, accessed 7 December 2020. See [here](#).

<sup>266</sup> From Martha Myers, through interview with Myriam Douo and Samia Dumbuya.

<sup>267</sup> Interview with Myriam Douo and Samia Dumbuya.

<sup>268</sup> Pablo Ciochini and Stefanie Khoury. "Investor State Dispute Settlement: Institutionalising 'Corporate Exceptionality,'" *Oñati Socio-legal Series* 8.6 (2018). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3194643>

# **Section 11: Conclusions And Ways Forward**



Capitalism is built on a (neo)colonial world order and is at the root of the climate crisis. By exploring how various racialised communities in Europe are impacted by the climate crisis, this report shows how (neo)colonial capitalism belies their adverse exposure. The disparities in access to decision-making are also a result of this oppressive, extractive mechanism. Here we offer a summary of ways in which (neo)colonial capitalism ensures racialised communities are heavily exposed to and impacted by the climate crisis. This should give readers the ability to better recognise colonial capitalist dynamics. We then offer decolonising, anti-racist and justice-centred ways forward, inspired by the work and responses of racialised communities in Europe.

## Recognising colonial capitalist, racist dynamics

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This report illustrates how (neo)colonial capitalism plays out, from the impacts of chlordecone and hurricanes in France's enduring (neo)colonial territories Martinique and Guadeloupe, to the transnational waste management systems where Roma communities are made to live near the dumps. As we have seen, it is not simply the final impact of climate disruption, but the extraction and flows of resources, labour as well as capital that must be examined. Mechanisms that exclude racialised communities, like Travellers, from this accumulated wealth and public services to secure such wealth and services for a select few, are also a part of maintaining colonial capitalism.

States are not the only colonising power at play. Large corporations recreate these dynamics, since they inhabit a key position in the capitalist political economy, profiting from anything from rare earth metal extraction towards a 'green' economy, to waste removal and a border security industry developed to keep migrants out. **It is evident that racism is a pillar of (neo)colonial capitalism, and racialised communities continue to be picked out for extractive practices.** The dynamics in the diagram are not exhaustive, nor do all of the 'steps' apply fully to all of the racialised communities covered. However, they are general patterns observed.

## A Framework for Decolonising, Anti-racist Climate Action

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True climate justice towards an equitable, sustainable future for all requires the recognition and abolition of (neo)colonial capitalism. This system is at the root of the climate crisis, and therefore we need to reckon with our (neo)colonial histories and shift away from the underlying ideas. This is the only way to ensure a just future for all, and also the only way to protect racialised communities from the rise of eco-nationalism or the far-right capture of environmental and climate issues, inciting a further slide into racism in Europe. This also includes attending to other forms of oppression that can also be linked to colonialism, such as cis-heteropatriarchy, although the focus of this report is not on these other forms. This section lays out the first steps to decolonise and shift away from colonial capitalism.

The following framework is a starting point and intended to incite discussion. The framework is aimed at anti-racist organisations and movements within Europe, but climate organisations can and should consider many of the points. It is certainly not exhaustive. While Indigenous groups and other colonised peoples have been stewards of our lands and our environment for years and we can draw inspiration from them, pushing through these ubiquitous, colonial frontiers towards a new system for all communities is uncharted territory. The framework is divided up into several pillars, and under these pillars fall principles, to which actions and demands are attached.



## Some Final Future Directions and Strategies

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### **COLLABORATIONS:** *Strategic considerations for anti-racist groups in working with climate organisations*

- **Develop decolonising, anti-racist positions on climate action first, and THEN seek collaboration with climate organisations on your own terms.** This will be less draining, as you can determine at the very beginning of a collaboration if it is worth your time and energy.
- **When seeking collaboration with climate organisations, focus on organisations that centre a justice-based approach.** Organisations that do not have this will be more difficult to work with, less willing and ultimately more apt to lapse into racist tendencies as they are unaware of these. Examples of climate and environmental organisations with a justice-based approach include Environmental Justice Foundation, European Environmental Bureau, Friends of the Earth Europe, 350.org and ActionAid.

### **INFORMATION AND FUNDING NEEDED**

- Many European anti-racist organisations indicate they do not have enough data and information available to take anti-racist climate action. This is a big gap that needs filling to improve and develop the points above, and research will therefore play a key role.
- Many European anti-racist organisations indicate they do not have enough funding/capacity available to take anti-racist climate action. This means that funders and organisations that do have funding will play a key role in supporting the next steps as, without funding, organisations are also without capacity.

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