

Thousands call for ‘climate reparations and justice’ in global protests

Fridays for Future ‘strikes’ in about 450 places demanded rich countries pay for damage from global heating



The biggest Fridays for Future protest was in Berlin, where 20,000 people were estimated to have participated. Photograph: Christian Mang/Reuters

Damien Gayle *and agencies*

Fri 23 Sep 2022 18.23 BST

Thousands of young people have staged a coordinated “global climate strike” across Asia, Africa and Europe in a call for reparations for those worst affected by climate breakdown.

From New Zealand and Japan to Germany and the Democratic Republic of Congo, activists walked out of schools, universities and jobs to demand rich countries pay for the damage global heating is inflicting on the poor.

The protests take place six weeks before the **Cop27** climate summit, where developing countries plan to push for compensation for climate-related destruction to homes, infrastructure and livelihoods. In the latest day of action by the Fridays For Future movement, strikes “for climate reparations and justice” were planned in about 450 locations worldwide.

Recent months have seen deadly floods engulfing large parts of Pakistan, wildfires ravaging north Africa, Europe and North America, and record-breaking heatwaves in Britain and India.

“We’re striking all over the world because the governments in charge are still doing too little for climate justice,” said Darya Sotoodeh, a spokesperson for the group’s chapter in Germany.



Over 100 people took part in the climate strike in Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore), India. Photograph: Jagadeesh Nv/EPA

“One day, it could be my house that gets flooded,” said 15-year-old Park Chae-yun, one of about 200 protesting in Seoul, South Korea. “I’m living with a sense of crisis, so I think it is more important to deliver my concerns to the government to take preventive measures rather than going to school.”

The biggest strike took place in Berlin, with police in the German capital estimating 20,000 took part in a rally calling on their government to set up a €100bn fund for tackling the climate crisis.

About 400 young activists gathered in the Democratic Republic of Congo’s capital, Kinshasa, chanting “Act for Africa, protect our planet”. They marched on the shoulder of a busy thoroughfare carrying cardboard signs saying “Climate Justice” and “Climate SOS”. In Rome, 5,000 young people turned out for a march that ended near the Colosseum. One carried a placard saying: “The climate is changing. Why aren’t we?”

Denmark is the only rich country that has so far stepped up with funding for the problem of “loss and damage” due to climate-related disasters, **announcing at the UN assembly this week** it would provide DKK 100m (£12m) to address it.

A statement on the Fridays For Future website said: “Colonisers and capitalists are at the core of every system of oppression that has caused the climate crisis, and decolonisation, using the tool of climate reparations, is the best kind of climate action.”

The Fridays For Future youth movement began in 2018, inspired by Greta Thunberg’s solitary protests outside the Swedish parliament. It reached a high point in November 2019, when 4 million people took part in 4,500 actions worldwide on one Friday.

Young people demand climate justice in run-up to Cop27 UN talks

Activists from global south demand recompense for damage from countries most responsible for crisis



Young people take part in a protest in Cape Town, South Africa, last month calling for the government to take immediate action to halt the climate crisis. Photograph: Nardus

Engelbrecht/AP

Sandra Laville

Mon 3 Oct 2022 11.20 BST

Young people from some of the countries most affected by climate breakdown have warned they are not victims but a force to be reckoned with in the run-up to a UN climate conference in Egypt.

Led by climate groups across **Africa** and the Middle East, hundreds of activists from countries that are the least responsible for the crisis but are experiencing the worst impacts have gathered in Tunisia to prepare for what they say will be a collective fight for justice for their countries and communities, which they will take to Cop27 next month.

They are campaigning on issues including adaptation funding and recompense for damage from countries that have been the most responsible for global heating.

At **Cop26** in Glasgow, delegates promised to give a total of \$350m to help the worst affected countries adapt to the climate emergency. But promises for funding have been broken in the past, and the issue of adaptation funding, along with demands for loss and damage funding to be paid to vulnerable countries by the US and Europe, is a clash point with the global south.

Maria Reyes, 20, from Mexico, attended the Tunis climate camp because her experience as a representative of the global south at Cop26 was so disappointing. She said the gathering was exclusive and member states wasted time arguing over commas, rather than tackling the issues that mattered.

“I came home after the Cop with a deep need to get involved in local resistance, because Glasgow made me lose all confidence in international politics and made me realise that the real resistance against the climate crisis comes from grassroots and indigenous communities,” she said. “I wanted to join the camp to be part of the construction of a space in which we can develop capacities and plan how we can articulate ourselves during Cop.”

Ayisha Siddiqa, 23, an activist from Pakistan, who has organised many school strikes for climate since 2019, believes in order to fight the crisis, people have to

address the injustices that mean people from Middle East, Africa, Latin America and southern Asia, whose countries contributed least, are suffering the most.

“I come from a tribal community in northern Pakistan and our way of life is in extreme danger as heatwaves become more common, our glaciers melt and flash flooding wipes away entire villages. These are things we cannot adapt to, and loss of community, culture and families we can not recover from ... I was very eager to attend this camp in Tunisia and build a community with people who have been doing environmental work on ground.”

Some of those who attended the camp will travel to **Egypt** for Cop27, in the hope that the conference will this time properly address the needs of countries least responsible for the climate emergency.

Omar Elmawi, 34, from Kenya, is a climate activist who has coordinated a campaign to stop the **world's longest heated crude oil pipeline** in east Africa, which is forecast will contribute at least 700m tonnes of CO₂ in the 20 years it is expected to be operational.

“Cognisant that I am one of the 3.6 billion people in the developing countries that are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis while we have done little to nothing to cause the problem, joining the camp allowed me to meet and know my fellow climate victims from other global south countries,” Elmawi said.

“My aim is to rise from the ashes to show that we are not just victims but a force to reckon with. All we have to do is move past our small differences and find unity of purpose to stop the exploitation of global south resources, including oil and fossil gas, for the wealthier nations and instead push for real solutions that provide accessible and affordable energy to the millions of people that are energy poor.”

Greenpeace, one of the organisers of the climate camp in Tunisia, has expressed its anger at revelations that Cop27 is to be sponsored by the Coca-Cola company, a major international polluter.

The government of Egypt announced last week the drinks company was to be a sponsor. **In audits by Breakfree from Plastic**, Coca-Cola is consistently identified as the world's biggest plastic polluter. More than 99% of plastic is made from fossil fuels.