GJOP Global Justice Overcoming Poverty

Network BULLETIN

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INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, COP30 AND OTHER NEWS

Hosting the conference in Belem, at the heart of the Amazon Basin, was a deliberate choice. President Lula called it 'a political and symbolic decision', aimed at showing that the Amazon is an essential part of the climate solution, not merely a topic for debate.

The Brazilian government also committed to unprecedented Indigenous participation, with some 2,500 Indigenous people attending the summit. It marked the first time Indigenous leadership, rights, and knowledge were placed so centrally in global climate negotiations.

Indigenous-led protests had an effective impact: Columbia declared the Amazon an exclusion zone for extractivism[1], while Brazil announced the protective demarcation of 10 Indigenous lands – a key demand. Ministers from several countries and philanthropic leaders signed the land protection commitments, recognizing Indigenous people and traditional communities as essential guardians of the forests and central actors in the climate agenda.

Brazil's Minister for Indigenous People, Sônia Guajajara, also signed a commitment to allocate an additional 59 million hectares of public land to Indigenous peoples to implement Brazil's National Policy for Territorial and Environmental Management of Indigenous Land.

According to Indigenous leaders present at the event, the package of ordinances finally meets historical demand for territories to be recognized as a part of the climate solution, given the proven role of Indigenous lands in containing deforestation and preserving the Amazon. The recognition of Indigenous leaders at the event, including their right to self-determination, is an important victory of this COP. The Amazon is home to most of the world's isolated peoples.

However, COP30 did not deliver the historic decision the world urgently needed. **A just transition**[2] won't be possible with the expansion of fossil fuel extraction, nor can COP ignore the risks to social and environmental health and human rights resulting from the mining boom, already impacting on Indigenous people.

The presence of fossil fuel **lobbyists at COP conferences** has been an acceptable practice – and COP30 was no different. An analysis from the *Kick Big Polluters Out (KBPO)* coalition revealed that one in 25 participants (some 1,600 people) represented the fossil fuel industry. They outnumbered all countries' delegations except Brazil, which numbered 3,805. KBPO

[1] Extractivism is an economic system based on extracting large quantities of natural resources, especially for export with minimal processing

[2] A framework to ensure a fair shift from fossil fuels to clean energy for workers and communities

also calculated that lobbyists have received two thirds more passes to COP30 Forest protection than all the delegates from the 10 most climate vulnerable nations.

Despite being located in the heart of the Amazon, COP30 delivered little on **forest protection**. The final agreement failed to mention deforestation. Instead, there will be a separate, voluntary roadmap for forest preservation, mirroring the parallel initiative established for fossil fuels.

President Lula's flagship initiative to pay for rainforest protection also failed to reach its goal. Fifty-three countries endorsed this proposed fund, with total pledges standing at $6.6 billion – far from the initial investment target of $25 billion. Eighteen board members, equally representing rainforest nations and donor countries, are set to oversee the initiative, which will support up to 70 eligible developing nations. A minimum of 20% must be allocated towards Indigenous groups and traditional communities.

The closest commitment to a **fossil fuel phase-out** included in the final agreement was a concession that nations should implement carbon-cutting plans 'taking into account decisions' made over years of UN climate talks, including the unprecedented commitment made at COP28 to 'transition from fossil fuels'. (Earth.Org.)

The final agreement calls for the tripling of funding for **climate adaptation,** to be provided by rich countries to protect vulnerable nations from the escalating impacts of climate change. The final suggested date for disbursing the $120 billion or so was changed from 2030 to 2035.

A new Gender Action Program, enhancing national gender and environmental support, was adopted with 27 actions recommended to countries that signed the Paris agreement.

The Just Transition mechanism to help countries shift to low carbon economies in ways that protect workers and communities around the world, and the rights of Indigenous peoples, won't happen with the expansion of fossil fuel extraction.

Source: Extracts from EARTH.ORG, 24 November 2025. 'Did COP30 Succeed or Fail?' by Martina Igini. Collated and condensed by Mary Boyd.

TIME TO LOOSEN BILLIONAIRES' STRANGLEHOLD ON HUMANITY

Economic reporting could mislead one into believing that budget deficits are the most important challenge governments face. They're used as an excuse to curtail spending on necessary benefits for the society, including health care, education, social security, climate action and more.

A United States study, referenced by *Guardian* writer, George Monbiot, shows that the very rich consider budget deficits to be the most important issue, with climate change action at the bottom of their list. They were more likely to insist that social security and healthcare should be cut, and less likely to believe that the unemployed should have a 'decent standard of living', or that there should be more regulation of oil companies, banks and health insurers. Monbiot writes that the very rich 'were fiercely opposed to redistribution'. Clearly, these ultra-wealthy think differently from most of us.

A recent Oxfam study found that, over the past year, 'the 10 richest billionaires in the USA became $698 billion wealthier, and the arrival of the world's first trillionaire grew more imminent'. As Monbiot writes, 'That money alone, the annual increment of the wealth of 10 people, is almost 10 times the annual amount required to end extreme poverty worldwide.'

Monbiot's column was partly in response to billionaire Bill Gates's recent essay arguing that money would be better spent on poverty, disease and climate adaptation than on cutting

greenhouse emissions. It also comes in the wake of news that Elon Musk is about to become the world's first trillionaire. (To get an idea of how much that is, counting a trillion seconds would take 32,000 years.)

Clearly, these ultra-wealthy think differently from most of us. So why do so many people accept their reasoning about deficits and affordability? When it comes to politics, Monbiot notes, money talks. 'The richer they become, the more they can bend the state and economic system to their will, ensuring that they become richer still.' Taxing the super-affluent at rates that would still leave them with enough to maintain lavish lifestyles could generate enough money to resolve many societal issues, from health to hunger to global heating.

As Oxfam states: 'Rapidly increasing corporate concentration in recent decades has given large firms more political influence and market power – and thus more power to directly shape people's lives by, for example, shaping policy and setting wages, working conditions, and prices.' We're seeing a blatant example in the USA: the current administration is lowering taxes for the rich while cutting essential services for the middle and working classes, along with climate change policies and more.

Despite relentless propaganda and distractions from billionaire-owned media outlets and social media platforms, many people are starting to see through the smoke. A recent YouGov poll found 60% of American adults (including 40% of Republicans!) support raising taxes on millionaires and corporations.

Elon Musk alone could solve many of the world's most serious problems and remain obscenely rich. Oxfam reports that, if the world's 10 richest people lost 99% of their wealth, they'd still be billionaires!

Humanity is facing numerous existential crises, from poverty and hunger to species extinction and climate disruption. We could resolve most of these simply by making the mega-rich pay their fair share. But they hold the levers of power, through media ownership, political influence and having the time and resources to manipulate public opinion.

Source: Science Matters – It's time to Loosen Billionaires' Stranglehold on Humanity, David Suzuki Foundation, 28/11/25. Slightly condensed by Mary Boyd.

TO COUNTER POPULISM AND BOLSTER SECURITY, EUROPE MUST RE-INVEST IN ITS CITIZENS

Europe faces a challenging security environment that demands substantial investment, just as weak growth threatens to become a structural issue. At the same time, European governments find their capacity to act increasingly contained, as political fragmentation and instability, exacerbated by the rise of populist movements, undermine effective governance.

In response, some governments may be tempted to resort to spending cuts. The recent austerity measures introduced by the UK, or Germany's push to boost security budgets, without similar investment in essential public services like healthcare and social support, illustrate this trend. Such an approach, however, misinterprets the lessons of the past decade's populist surge. The rise of populism was driven not just by economic hardship or cultural anxiety, but by a widespread perception that the state has abandoned ordinary citizens and a sentiment that mainstream political parties were complicit.

To rebuild public trust, governments should not further weaken the state but focus on making it work better: reducing bureaucratic inefficiencies, improving service delivery, and reinforcing confidence in public institutions. Populism is a powerful, intoxicating force that

numbs a sense of abandonment without addressing its root causes. It offers a fleeting sense of empowerment and belonging, channelling frustration into rage against elites and outsiders. But it masks the deeper pain: the vanishing jobs, eroded social ties, and dislocated places that made communities vulnerable to discontent in the first place.

The fact that populism responds to grievances but rarely solves them presents a critical opportunity for mainstream political forces to reclaim voters. The first step is to recognize the legitimate grievances that populism exploits, particularly the sense of betrayal stemming from economic policies like austerity. Studies by economists have shown how austerity measures fuelled support for BREXIT, while research by political scientists reveals how cuts to public services bolstered right-wing movements. Disillusioned by their experiences with governments, voters abandoned the parties they held responsible for the failures. Other studies reveal how concerns about housing, soaring rents and dwindling access to healthcare have deepened grievances and stoked political discontent, amplifying the populist appeal.

To counter the populist tide, mainstream politicians must prove that the state can again be a force for good. This means investing in public service delivery, allowing houses to be built, and reducing administrative burdens for citizens trying to access the state. Only by making government work for the people can mainstream forces regain people' s trust. By doing so, mainstream political forces offer more than just rhetoric. They rebuild trust and show that they genuinely understand the government failures that have driven voters to populists.

Policies after the financial crisis in many European countries focused on cutbacks and the privatization of public space. This contributed to a decline in political trust, a sense of unfairness, and tribal prosperity based on an "us-first" mentality. The quality of public space and public relations do not arise spontaneously; one has to invest in them. For this, public services have to be maintained, giving citizenship tangible form. At this point in our history, where the security of the European continent is threatened, let mainstream political forces use this time to reinvigorate the state, not only through defence but by a new social contract.

Europe's security strategy must be holistic and multidimensional, encompassing more than just defence. While recent efforts have rightly focused on mitigating risks, this narrow approach risks overlooking the importance of economic security. As economic security underpins hard security, the strategy should prioritize innovation, international collaboration, and robust economic policies that allow countries to have the fiscal space to invest in their citizens. Integrating security into all policy areas is essential and we should avoid falling into the pitfall of choosing between warfare and welfare. Only by adopting a comprehensive, 360-degree approach can Europe safeguard its strategic interests in an increasingly complex global landscape. Shrinking the European social model will sting a continent already bruised by public underinvestment and flailing public services, and doing so could kill Europe's security efforts at the ballot box. [What is true for Europe is true for the rest of the world.]

Source: Catherine De Vries, 'To Counter Populism and Bolster Security, Europe Must Reinvest in its Citizens', Social Europe, slightly shortened by Mary Boyd.

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