

Edinburgh Climate March during COP27 Global Day of Action

Climate campaign groups combined forces to march through the city centre on the Global Day of Action during the UN Climate Conference COP27 which is being held in Egypt.

Beginning from St Andrew Square the groups (Edinburgh Climate Coalition, Climate Justice Coalition, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Global Justice Now, Extinction Rebellion Scotland, Tipping Point, BankTrack, Jubilee Scotland, Scot.E3 and others) marched first to HSBC Bank on Hanover Street demanding that the banks cancel all debt owed by global south countries. Countries in the Global South are currently spending 5 times more on unjust debt repayments than they are addressing the impact of the climate crisis. HSBC is one of the private creditors charging high interest rates for debt repayments from African countries, including continuing to demand debt repayments throughout the pandemic. Campaigners at Global Justice Now are calling for HSBC bank to cancel the debt of African countries.



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Liz Murray, head of Scottish campaigns Global Justice Now said: "We're joining with thousands of others around the world demanding action from those in power to tackle the interlocking crises of climate, energy and the cost of living. All three are the result of an economic system that puts profit before people's lives and the health of the planet.

"This profit-driven system is hurting us all – here in the UK and around the world. And countries in the global south are getting hit particularly hard. They're suffering some of the worst impacts of climate change, despite having played almost no part in causing it, and they're additionally burdened by enormous debts. Banks here in Scotland are implicated in that – with companies like HSBC, who we'll be passing as we march on November 12, and BlackRock making big profits from the interest on those debts and refusing to cancel them."

The march then continued to the UK Government Office on Sibbald Place where campaigners demanded an end to new fossil fuel projects. Since COP26 campaigners say the UK Government

has opened new oil and gas fields, encouraged further exploration and is considering approving the huge Rosebank oil field that contains 500 million barrels of oil.

Mary O'Brien, a grandmother of 10 who is involved in the Stop Rosebank campaign said: "If the UK Government were to approve the vast new Rosebank field it would be adding fuel to the fire that is engulfing our planet. Climate science is perfectly clear that new oil and gas is incompatible with the urgent action we need to take to cut climate pollution.

Projects like Rosebank only benefit oil companies at a time when they are already making billions in profits and causing widespread harm.

"Given the urgency and seriousness of the climate emergency, it is unbelievable that we are even having to fight against new oil and gas projects. But thousands of people across the UK and around the world are coming together to stop these climate-wrecking projects and to build that better future. I'm doing this for my grandchildren and for future generations, so that they can have a liveable planet. Join us on the march as we demand a rapid and fair transition away from fossil fuels to reliable, affordable renewables."



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At Santander Bank in the city centre the campaigners called for fossil fuel finance to end.

Natasha Ion, climate campaigner at Banktrack, said their organisation would be highlighting the fact that world's largest banks have pumped \$4.6 trillion dollars into fossil fuels since the Paris Agreement was signed. She said: "The climate march will tell banks that they must go beyond burning, and stop financing the extractivism that is wrecking the planet. The fossil fuel industry is one of the main drivers of climate change, and has been implicated in endless human rights violations, primarily against Indigenous communities and those on the frontlines of extraction in the Global South.

"Commercial banks also finance major companies guilty of mass deforestation in regions such as Latin America. The highly polluting meat and dairy industry, with massive business like JBS at the centre, has consistently encroached on indigenous lands and been active in illegal deforestation. Likewise, biomass companies have been accused of land grabbing and causing social conflict in Latin America, while falsely promoting themselves as a "green" fuel alternative."

At Market Street the attention was focussed on the UK and other governments which are increasingly persecuting activists cracking down on protest and restricting civic space.

Protesters surrounded The Scottish Parliament with demands that can be delivered by MSPs. The fossil fuel energy price crisis is driving the cost of living pressures being felt by people across Scotland. This action is to remind The Scottish Government that action they take at home can cut emissions and improve lives such as insulating homes and improving public transport.

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