

## Speech Fridays for Future Global Strike 25.03.22 #PeopleNotProfit

Here we are again. For the tenth time, we are striking today with hundreds of thousands of activists worldwide, demanding long-needed climate justice. We stand here side-by-side with MAPA, the most affected people and areas by the climate crisis, and join their demands for justice and decolonization.

While our demands are not followed up on after more than three years, other crises become clearer than ever: The war of aggression against Ukraine, which is against international law, also affects us deeply and we stand in solidarity with all people who suffer from it; be it because they have to witness this war on the ground, because they themselves experience racism while fleeing, or because they openly criticize the war and thus suffer from repression. We demand an immediate end to the Russian attack and a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

Every armed conflict costs and destroys human lives, deprives many people of their homes, their livelihoods and their families, friends and neighbors. Everyone has the right to live a self-determined life in safety. That is why we stand here today to fight for climate justice, for a peaceful world without wars.

Raw materials, especially fossil energies, also play a role in Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. After all, gas exports make up a large part of Russia's economy. The EU, and Germany in particular, continue to import Russian gas and use it to finance Putin's war. That's why we finally need an exit from fossil fuels and a massive expansion of renewable energies - against the climate crisis and for peace. We see a lot of solidarity right now, but solidarity must not be decided by the color of your skin and at the gas station!

A big driver of this injustice is colonialism. Over the last 500 years, many countries in the global North have subjugated people and territories in other parts of the world. A key motive for this colonization has been access to resources available there. In order to make as much profit as possible, people were enslaved, abducted and mistreated. To justify these acts, a worldview was propagated that was based on racist stereotypes and portrayed white people as superior. This racism is still deeply rooted in our society today. The climate crisis resulted from the misconception of primarily white people that they can dominate nature and other people. That means: the struggle against the climate crisis can only be anti-colonial; in this movement and in the whole world!

(Neo)colonial structures continue until today. Through neo-colonialism, industrialized countries and large corporations secure control over resources of countries of former colonies and in MAPA. Oppression is no longer achieved by force alone, but also by the capitalist world market.

Right on our doorstep sits HeidelbergCement; the second largest greenhouse gas emitter in the DAX after RWE. For example, they are mining in occupied Palestinian territories in violation of international law and are planning a cement factory in the protected Kendeng area in Indonesia. HeidelbergCement is actively destroying ecosystems and livelihoods of people around the world. These neocolonial crimes must stop! We do not want to and cannot accept that a

company based in Heidelberg commits such blatant violations of human and international law and tramples on the rights of indigenous minorities.

This applies not only to large corporations, but also to governments. Let's look at China, where Han Chinese are oppressing the Uyghur Muslim minority and erasing their cultural identity. Millions of people are imprisoned, tortured and murdered in so-called re-education camps - more like modern concentration camps - while German corporations like Volkswagen continue to sell cars produced by Uyghur forced labor, thus financing the Chinese regime. We demand: People not profit! It must not be that the oppression of the Uyghurs and the violation of their rights by Western companies continues to be supported.

The former German Empire, as a colonial power, also exploited the people and resources in its colonies and, as such a small country, has the fourth largest historical emissions worldwide. Therefore, we also have a historical responsibility. We demand that the governments of the Global North, especially Germany, finally live up to their responsibility.

The first step is reparations to MAPA - both in the form of recognizing the land rights of indigenous, Black, anti-patriarchal, and marginalized communities, and by providing resources to adapt to the impacts of the climate crisis. But these reparations are not a charitable gift from the Global North. They are part of a process that restores justice, albeit far too late! It is a common misconception that white people in the Global North should or even could save MAPA through donations. This notion only reinforces colonial power structures. This phenomenon is also called white saviourism. In reality, however, it is quite different. We do not have to save MAPA through our supposedly heroic actions, but rather we have to pay our debt for the damage we have caused for centuries and continue to cause.

The rich countries of this world are responsible for over 90% of the world's CO2 emissions. This means that they are responsible for more than twice as much emissions and pollution as the entire poorer part of the world's population. This means that the people who are most affected contribute the least to global emissions, whereas those who are hardly affected are largely responsible for them. Why is this so? Because economic growth and capitalism dominate the economy and politics, putting the profit interests of large corporations above the interests of the people. Because the ruling class, especially corporations and governments from the Global North, have gained power for centuries through colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, white supremacy and exploitation, which they have used ever since to exploit and destroy the earth and its most marginalized populations without remorse. Let's be loud together to make it clear to big corporations and politicians that the interests of all people - and MAPAs in particular - must be put before the greed for profit of the individual few.

At the same time, the working\* class is being used as a tool to build the very capitalist system that is destroying it. We demand a transformation that is also socially just in Germany. That workers\* are not exploited, but supported in their labor struggles. Because we have had a failed energy and transport policy for decades, we need socially just answers to the rising energy and fuel prices now,

so that the current crises are not passed on to the shoulders of the poorest. In a country where millions of people have to work in a low-wage sector, where they are systematically exploited by large corporations or have to survive under inhumane conditions in the Hartz4 system, we have to get to the root of the system instead of shifting responsibility onto individuals. We will not allow social justice and climate justice to be played off against each other!

We have to talk about who is responsible for the destruction and has to pay for it - the richest people and big corporations. We know that there is enough money, it just needs to be redistributed, both from north to south and from top to bottom! Burn capitalism, not fossil fuels!

Besides all this, we must not forget that currently the ongoing murderous EU external borders, structural racism and right-wing extremism in Germany are completely pushed out of the public perception. At the same time, the New Right is positioning itself more broadly than it has in a long time, especially now in the Corona pandemic. With fake news, distortions of history, and anti-Semitic conspiracy narratives, they are eating their way into the middle of society and shifting the discourse ever further to the right. In Heidelberg and all over Germany, right-wingers lead the "Querdenken" scene, followed by conspiracists, who want to considerably present themselves as bourgeois, but in reality are just either fascists or people who think it's okay to march with fascists. These are the same right-wingers who deny climate change and boycott any change for more justice. As long as fascists sit in our parliaments and march in our streets, there will never be climate justice. We all have to be anti-fascist!

We call on politics and this society: Finally do something against the injustices! Be loud for justice and be loud against the right! End the oppression and exploitation of MAPA by western corporations! Provide adequate compensation for the damage done through reparations!

Colonialism and capitalism are at the core of the oppressive system that has caused the climate crisis. This exploitative system must finally come to an end!

The new government shows us what was already clear before: politics will never implement measures that are even rudimentarily sufficient to get to the root of this system and to be able to fight the climate crisis.

A real system change can only be fought for from the streets. We need you and we need all people in this society to stand united behind the struggles of those most affected against this system. We need to stand in solidarity with the labor struggles of the working people, with the centuries of justice struggles of all those who have been exploited by colonialism and capitalism and all those most affected by the climate crisis. Today and every day in the future until we fight for a system that puts #PeopleNotProfit first!