

RIGHT TO COME,  
RIGHT TO STAY!



**DECOLONIAL** ■  
**GATHERING** ■

**CLIMATE**  
**JUSTICE &**  
**FORCED**  
**MIGRATION**

# WELCOME TO THE DECOLONIAL CLIMATE JUSTICE GATHERING

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This gathering was a space for and by BIPOC migrants / refugees and activists to collectively focus on the deep intersections between climate justice, colonialism, climate change and forced migration. The zine captures the essence of our collective conversations and calls to action

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The content is crafted by participants to the gathering, and informed by the facilitators' input. Some of the content in this zine discusses traumatic events that have happened and are still happening in some areas of Global South countries, such as **Congo** and **Serranía del Perijá**: A region in **Columbia**.



## Climate Change | Climate Crisis | Climate Justice

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, and BIPOC communities are excessively affected. Rising temperatures, extreme weather, and environmental destruction threaten the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

Through all this, The Global South like Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia are the ones faces the worst consequences despite contributing the least to global carbon emissions.

People of BIPOC, are more vulnerable to displacement, and loss of livelihoods due to climate change.

**“The world without action is empty.”** Says Pablo.

Pablo was among one of the facilitators who came and shared light on what's happening in their country as an indigenous person of *Yukpa* from **Serranía del Perijá, Columbia.**



Photo by Travis morgan

They shared with us the history and how rich the land of their region (Serranía del Perijá) is but due to western powers and limited government support to address their grievances, western leaders are tearing the country apart' by illegally mining large scale project of coal which is depleting natural resources and encroaching on ancestral lands, hunting indigenous people and normalizing it as same as hunting animals.

“They dont call this global crisis or climate crisis but they call it colonial crisis, said Pablo.”

### **What could we do about global warming?**

The world without action is empty but the base of everything is healing. if we don't heal our territory's then we can't help with the climate change. if we don't also keep fighting here nothing will change, said Pablo.

- **Climate change**

We must demand and fight to the western countries for the damages caused by their disproportionately large contributions to climate change.

- **Climate Justice**

The fight for climate justice is a fight for racial justice, not just about preventing environmental destruction. It's about addressing the inequalities that climate change escalates.





**FREECONGONOW**

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Zine: **Climate Justice from an Eastern DRC Perspective:  
The Congo's Global Struggle**

- Introduction: **The Significance of Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second-largest country in Africa and the 11th-largest in the world, a vast country in central Africa, covering 2.34 million square kilometers and home to over 110 million people . It contains the Congo Basin, which holds the world's second-largest tropical rainforest. This rainforest, often called the lungs of Africa, plays a vital role in global climate stability, absorbing above 1,5 billion tons of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) annually to be released in the sky, and is key to preventing future climate changes and natural disasters. The peat swamp forest of the Congo Basin stores around 29 billion tons of carbon – approximately equivalent to three years' worth of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The DRC is also one of the most biodiverse countries globally, with over 450 species of mammals, 1150 species of birds, 700 species of fish, and 15,000 unique plant species. Included are rare species such as the northern white rhino, mountain gorilla, endemic okapi, as well as endemic great apes the eastern lowland gorilla and bonobo. Endemicity is high – 6% of mammals and 10% of plants are only found in the DRC. In addition, the DRC contains five natural World Heritage sites, more than the rest of Africa

combined. A vast network of protected areas representing about 8% of the national territory preserves DRC's variety of ecosystems.



The second largest rainforest in the world Congo Basin under threat by fossil fuel multinational corporations

This includes Virunga National Park, home to the famous mountain gorilla. It is home to the Congo River, Africa's second-longest river, and seven active volcanoes, including Nyiragongo and Nyamuragira, which shape the land and threaten local populations. Despite its immense environmental importance, the DRC remains trapped in a cycle of exploitation and conflict fueled by the global demand for its 1100 minerals resources, such as cobalt, coltan, gold, and diamonds.

Instead of leading to prosperity, these resources have brought war with crimes against humanity, displacement, and environmental destruction to the country since colonial rule to neocolonialism and imperialism.

## **1. Deforestation and Resource Exploitation in Congo Basin**

The Congo Basin is under constant threat from deforestation caused by global industries, particularly for the production of palm oil,

rubber for tires, and timber. The destruction of these forests not only harms local ecosystems but also accelerates climate change, as fewer trees are available to absorb carbon dioxide. In Baringa Village, located deep in the Congo Basin, multinational corporations are looking to start drilling for oil and gas, which would cause massive deforestation and pollution of the local rivers leading to a climate crisis.

The indigenous communities, who have lived in harmony with the forest for generations, are resisting these efforts. An indigenous leader declared, “We won’t compromise,” he told the crowd gathered in Baringa, a village deep in Congo Basin “If oil activity is what they are going to do here, they will have to kill me first, as the chief. Then they will have to slaughter all the population!”



Jean Bolengu Ekunja, the chief of Baringa, a village in the Congo basin rainforest that is under threat from fossil fuel exploration. Photograph: Junior D Kannah

At the heart of the struggle is the DRC’s hydrocarbons minister, Didier Budimbu, has stated, the country needs to extract its oil and gas “so that our children can eat and we can develop our economy.” It is the latest attempt to exploit fossil fuel resources in one of the world’s poorest countries, where almost two-thirds of people survive on less than \$2.15 (£1.73) a day.

This highlights the harsh reality: while protecting the forest is crucial for the planet, the Congolese government makes a choice over environmental protection for economic survival. The Congolese Constitution guarantees the protection of natural resources, but enforcement is weak. The lack of economic alternatives drives exploitation, with the government under pressure from multinational corporations.

DRC leaders argued that they were trying to generate revenue for their people. Observers have pointed out that oil auctions have often been used ahead of elections as ways to quickly generate income. At the time, Tosi Mpanu Mpanu, a diplomat and UN climate summit veteran, told the New York Times that, in light of the nation's poverty, "our priority is not to save the planet."

## **2. Neighboring countries Involvement in Congo: An International Problem**

The conflict in eastern Congo is complicated by Rwanda's and Uganda's involvement. These neighboring countries have been accused of supporting rebel groups, like the M23 and more than 100 groups actively involved into conflict, who operate in the resource-rich eastern provinces. Rwanda, in particular, is seen as backing these rebels, with the tacit approval of Western countries EU and USA due to its perceived role as a stable partner in the region.





M23 rebels into Eastern of Democratic Republic of Congo (Kivu)

Rwanda and Uganda will not stop their attempts to control and loot North and South Kivu (for Rwanda) and the Ituri district of the Eastern Province (for Uganda) as long as Kinshasa is unable to protect its borders. As strong allies of the US in the "war against terror" in the region, and particularly in Sudan (where Rwanda has an important contingent in the UN/African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur) and in Somalia (where Uganda is leading the fight against the al-Qaida-affiliated al-Shabaab), they can count on US and UK support.

Witness the major powers' failure to impose sanctions on both countries in the face of numerous reports implicating them in human rights violations and the looting of DRC natural resources. Most shocking in this regard is the international community's silence on the "2010 mapping report" of the UN high commissioner for human rights on crimes against humanity, war crimes, and possibly crimes of genocide committed by the current Rwanda regime within the Congolese territory between 1994 and 2003.

While Rwanda justifies its incursions by claiming to target Hutu militias responsible for the 1994 genocide, many analysts argue the true motivation is the control of Congo's vast mineral wealth. The same is true for Uganda, which has also been involved militarily and

through proxy militias. This foreign interference has exacerbated one of the world's largest humanitarian crises. More than 7 million Congolese people are internally displaced and 1 million are seeking asylum in the neighboring countries, and the country hosts over 700,000 refugees from neighboring countries like Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic. Many of these refugees have been in Congo for over two decades, adding to the already strained resources and worsening the humanitarian situation.



Mugunga refugees camps Death toll in bombings by M23 at displacement camps in eastern Congo rises to at least 35 May 10, 2024 Ruth Alonga

### **3. Congo's Global Impact: Minerals and Technology**

The DRC is one of the world's most resource-rich countries, holding an abundance of essential minerals critical for global industries, especially technology. The Congo supplies 70% of the world's cobalt, which is vital for electric vehicle batteries and smartphones, and 60% of coltan, which is used in laptops and other electronic devices but the world has preferred to close its eyes about Congolese matters.

● **Here are 15 of the most valuable minerals in the DRC and their global contributions:**

1. Cobalt: 70% of global supply, essential for electric vehicle batteries.
2. Coltan (Tantalum): 60% of global supply, used in electronics.
3. Diamonds: 20% of the global industrial diamond market.
4. Copper: 8% of global supply, vital for electrical wiring.
5. Gold: Significant amounts, though much is illegally mined.
6. Tin: 6-7% of global production, used in electronics.
7. Zinc: Found in significant quantities, used in construction.
8. Uranium: Historically important, now largely depleted.
9. Manganese: Key for steel production.
10. Nickel: Found in large quantities, essential for batteries.
11. Lithium: Crucial for electric vehicles, reserves under-exploited.
12. Platinum: Valuable for jewelry and catalytic converters.
13. Bauxite: Used for aluminum production.
14. Tungsten: Important for electronics and tools.
15. Silver: Mined alongside gold and copper.

Despite this wealth, these resources have brought conflict and exploitation rather than prosperity. The technology industry, including smartphones, computers, and electric vehicles, depends heavily on Congo's minerals, yet the people of Congo receive little benefit. Instead, 48 women are raped daily in the ongoing conflict, and 40,000 children in labor work continues to be a widespread issue in mining regions.



Photo by Siddharth Kara in his new book cobalt Red

#### **4. The Legacy of Colonialism and Neocolonialism:**

The roots of Congo's exploitation trace back to King Leopold II of Belgium, who turned the country into his personal colony, extracting massive amounts of rubber trees, ivory, and palm oil. During his reign, an estimated 10 million Congolese died from forced labor, a result of crimes against humanity, violence, and disease. Leopold II stole enormous wealth worth \$1 billion while the Congolese peoples suffered.

Post-independence, the situation worsened under Mobutu Sese Seko, a dictator installed by Western powers, notably Belgium and the United States. Mobutu looted the country for 3 decades, amassing billions abroad while the Congolese remained in extreme poverty. Ironically, Mobutu even supported the apartheid regime in South Africa, showing how foreign interests have shaped Congo's history to the detriment of its people. Today, Western corporations continue to extract Congo's wealth, perpetuating instability and fueling conflicts that have claimed the lives of over 6 million since the Congo Wars (1996-2004)

## **5. Activists are in Danger: The Fight for Truth and Global Call to Action**

The pervasive corruption in the DRC makes activism a dangerous pursuit. Those who challenge the corrupt elite or foreign exploitation often face death. A young man named Floribert Bwana Chui was born in 1981 in Goma, which is located in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo and borders Rwanda.

He died in Goma because he was killed between July 8 and 9 of 2007 for not having consented to the passage of deteriorated foodstuffs entering Congo from Rwanda, which are harmful to the health of the population. He was one of the activists from Goma, murdered in July 2007 after refusing bribes of \$1,000 and later \$3,000 to allow poisonous food to travel from Rwanda into the country. Shortly after rejecting the bribe, he was found dead between July 8-9, 2007. His death highlights the risks for those standing up against corruption and exploitation in the DR Congo.



RIP Dear Floribert Bwana Cui, was murdered in Goma 8-9 july 2007 while he was fighting against corruption

The exploitation of minerals in the Congo, from the reign of King Leopold II to today's multinational corporations, continues unchecked. Europe and the international community have a moral responsibility to address these long-standing injustices. The

Congolese people are not just fighting for survival; they are fighting for the health of the planet. Without global intervention and support, the Congo Basin and its people will continue to suffer.

As FreeCongoNow advocates for reaching a solution and many others have expressed, “that climate crisis in the DR Congo is a global crisis. And Congo's struggle is the world's struggle for climate sustainability, biodiversity, and climate justice.”

The world cannot afford to face disasters, which means the world needs to stop ignoring Congo's climate crisis before it leads to a natural disaster, not only in DR Congo but any part of *the planet* will suffer as well. Speaking the truth, FreeCongoNow argued that DR Congo's matters require global attention and global justice action to stop exploiting her riches with impunity.

#FreeCongoNow  
By Indestructible  
Amsterdam - The Netherlands .

## Thoughts to Inspire

A reflection shared by Ashley in solidarity  
with the journey we share.

*“My thought on the climate justice movement are constantly being shaped and reshaped as I'm in these spaces organizing as well as deconstructing previous ideas of what I thought a climate organizer looked like.*

*I'm still figuring out a lot of stuff but at the moment I see that the path forward is creating community through affinity spaces that have a shared vision. As far as BIPOC spaces in the climate justice movement in Europe, there's a lot of systemic barriers we're up against on an individual level which can then cause harm when we're in challenging discussions about who is racially marginalized and how it impacts us differently.*



*BIPOC and women from the global south are those on the frontline of the climate crisis and we need to use our privileges here to highlight the disparities in resources and create spaces here that dismantle the systems we say we're against.*



*By this I mean that we create spaces where we start with the lived experiences of many BIPOC voices and collectively examine ways we can build solidarity with one another first. So looking at our collective, although we're currently undergoing a lot of internal dialogue at the moment, we believe in a circular economy because this is also a fight against capitalism. We approach this by having a skill share where we ask members who have experience to share knowledge on a skill like natural dyeing.*



*This is a very small way to show how plants are used in natural dyeing techniques already in many communities and can create less harm when washing clothes for example. We're still in conversation on how to handle these things but this is a start."*

- Ashley



## Letter to a Friend

In this letter Sam(they) shares their heartfelt reflection from the gathering.

*Hey friend,*

*It's been a while, but I've been thinking about you and the many deep, important conversations we have had over the years. I've been thinking about how we were able to grow together by having them, even when they were hard. So, I thought I would reach out, to give you an update on life lately and share a few thoughts I had. I would love to hear from you.*

*This week I'm at a BIPOC decolonial climate justice gathering. The first ever gathering I am participating in. It's all a lot, but in the best way and I'm so grateful for having this space.*

*We've talked about so many important things, and I wanted to share with you a few thoughts from conversations we had at the gathering.*

*You know me, Imma jump right in and let you be a part of my - maybe a bit all over the place- stream of thought.*

*We had two speakers come to the gathering to talk about Congo and the struggles of Indigenous People in Columbia. While talking about the struggles, they both empathized the comfort and privilege of the west, is the exploration of their and our communities around the world and how the best form of solidarity is to bring the fight here because "the head" is here.*

*We must make it uncomfortable for the people in power to exploit, show them that we will not stay silent while people are killed for capitalistic gains. Bringing the fight here is being in action.*

*Ally and Pablo did highlight the importance of actions in whichever form it comes. Be it boycotting iPhone and cutting back on consumption or organizing.*

*As Pablo said "the word without action is empty"*

*I've also been thinking about knowing that many things like my phone and other things in my life, I only have because people (and in a sense our people) have been and are being exploited, and the way that we use our phone and social media to shine light on that exploration. I guess it's the duality of living in the west (the head in a sense) and trying to bring the fight here.*

*Ally said he only eats one meal a day and that it is one way in which he tries to do something in his power to face this duality of living in care and be in action in a consumption way. For me it also really shows the privileges (that should not be privileges). Everyone should have access to food and yet food is being imported from where it's needed for some to throw it away. Even food products are produced by exploiting others (looking at you nestle (for example)). Food / hunger is used as a weapon in wars.*

*Looking at that also opens another door to understanding the meaning of food and the privileges connected to it...*

*Another quote I wrote down from Pablo, that I want to share, is this "we need to heal our one the Territories (our bodies) to also heal the world.*

*"We cannot stay disharmonized. It's hard to change the world when our body is disharmonized. Not being in community but trying to change things from an individual perspective can causes "eco-anxiety" or other mental health issues".*

*Our health is soooooo deeply connected to the world in which we live in, and I feel like we still have so much to learn about it and what it takes to heal (not just us individually but our human family and the earth).*

*Pablo said "When we are in community no one is left behind "Which reminds me of the conversations we had around healing justice and that healing must happen in community. And I guess, It also makes me think about how we organize and if we organize in a way that is sustainable and helps build the world we want to see.*

*I'm going to read a book called "My grandmother's hands" that focuses on intergenerational Trauma and what it does to us, so I'll probably learn more about healing justice and what being disharmonized as humanity means. What does it mean that we have so much pain and trauma in our DNAs?*



*“Climate change is the biggest crisis we as the human family have lived. There is no other option than radicalizing”*

*Yet another quote by Pablo. This might sound silly but when Pablo talked about “human family” I was like “yeah we are responsible for one another and families don’t (or shouldn’t) treat each other like we as humans do” I sometimes here “human family” and cringe (I don’t really know why), but when Pablo said it, it felt like those are words to really remind us of our connectedness and responsibility to not only one another but also the planet. Especially because he also talked about having to leave our bubbles and doing the work to make people, who don’t understand why things are important and the responsibility they have, understand that we are all we got, and we should care about each other and the world!*

*I guess that is all I’ve got to share. Thanks for being here and if you managed to read all my not necessarily coherent thought, I’m thankful that you did. I’m thankful that you were interested in my thoughts. I hope you’ll share yours with me and I’ll get to listen to your thoughts.*

*I hope you’re doing ok wherever you are right now and that we’ll get to meet soon (maybe even in a better world)!*

*Sending you all my love!*

-Sam

# A collective list of books shared during the gathering

- **Let this radicalize you** by Mariame Kaba

A practical and imaginative resource for activists and organizers building power in an era of destabilization and catastrophe.

- **We do this till we free us** by Mariame Kaba

A collection of essays and interviews that explore the abolition of police and the prison industrial complex (PIC) and the power of transformative justice.

- **Fresh banana leaves** by Jessica Hernandez

An Indigenous environmental scientist breaks down why western conservationism isn't working--and offers Indigenous models informed by case studies.

- **Radical dharma** by Rev. Angel kyodo Williams

Igniting a long-overdue dialogue about how the legacy of racial injustice and white supremacy plays out in society at large and Buddhist communities in particular, this urgent call to action outlines a new dharma that takes into account the ways that racism and privilege prevent our collective awakening.

- **My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies** by Resmaa Menakem

In this groundbreaking book, therapist Resmaa Menakem examines the damage caused by racism in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology.

- **Fearing the black body : The racial origins of fat phobia** by Sabrina strings

A non-fiction book by American sociologist Sabrina Strings about the history of fatphobia, which Strings argues is rooted in anti-Black racism.

- **The politics of trauma : Somatics, healing, and social justice** by Staci Haines

An essential tool for healers, therapists, activists, and trauma survivors who are interested in a justice-centered approach to somatic transformation.

- **Parabel of the sower** by Octavia Butler

A speculative fiction novel that centres around the irreversible consequences of climate change.

- **Witches, Midwives, and Nurses** by Barbara Ehrenreich

It traces the systematic and systemic persecution of women as healers beginning with the witch-hunt craze of the 14th through 17th centuries up to the early 20th Century.

Which companies mine  
in Congo?

NZURI COPPER LIMITED

FREEPORT - McMOGAN

GLENCORE XSTRATA PLC.

INFINITY LITHIUM CORP.

IVANHOE MINES

KATANGA MINE LIMITED

KILO GOLDMINES

PANGOLD RESOURCES

# BOOKS

Let this radicalize you by Mariame Kaba  
No Police " " "

We Do This Till We Free Us - Mariame Kaba

Fresh Banana Leaves - Jessica Hernandez

Radical Dharma - Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams

Fearing The Black Body: The Racial  
of Fat Phobia - Sabrina Strings

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma &  
the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts & Bodies  
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• We Do This Till We Free Us -

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by Resmaa Menakem

• The Politics of Trauma  
Somatics, Healing and  
Justice - Staci Harris

• Parabel of the Sower - Octavia Butler

COMPANIES THAT BUY COLTAN

• NOKIA

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