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Environment

Break free from fossil fuels

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During the first two weeks of May a global wave of action is taking place around the world around the demand: Break free from fossil fuels – keep the coal, oil, and gas in the ground.

As the [website](#) for the action says: “2015 was the hottest year ever recorded and the impacts of climate change are already hitting communities around the world. From rising sea levels to extreme storms, the need to act on climate change has never been more urgent. Added to that, the fossil fuel industry faces an unprecedented crisis – from collapsing prices, massive divestments, a new global climate deal, and an ever-growing movement calling for change. The time has never been better for a just transition to a clean energy system.”

Actions will be taking place in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Equator, Germany, Indonesia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Turkey as well as in Britain. In the USA, protests are taking place in: Denver Colorado, LA, Washington DC, Chicago, as well as in the Northwest and the North East.

In Brazil between 2-13 May thousands of indigenous peoples and climate activists will join together in four different peaceful actions focussing on key parts of the country's oil and gas infrastructure. Mobilizations will take place across all four corners of the country, including an indigenous rally in the Amazon (north), a thermal power plant blockade in Ceará (northeast), another blockade at the Jurong Shipyard railway and highway blockage (southeast) and anti-fracking occupation in Paraná (south).

In the Philippines on 4 May anti-coal activists coming from parts of the local government, the church, and affected communities from all over the Philippines converged in a climate march that aims to mobilize 10,000 people in Batangas City, where JG Summit Holdings aims to put up a 600-Megawatt coal fired power plant that is set to occupy a 20-hectare site in Barangay Pinamucan Ibaba, Batangas City. The people will be demanding the cancellation of the coal plant in Batangas as well as all 27 other proposed plants in the Philippines.

In South Africa two actions will take place each with hundreds of people highlighting the local impacts of coal and climate change. The first on 12th May will see people gathering in Witbank, one of the most polluted towns in the world, to speak out on the effects of climate change. The second on 14 May is focused on the Gupta residence in Saxonwold, Johannesburg. The Gupta family has recently been awarded a lucrative Eskom supply deal through the acquisition of the Optimum mine from Glencore.

In Germany during the weekend of 14-15 May a few thousand activists are expected to come to Lusatia (1.5 hours from Berlin, close to the Polish border), where local communities have struggled against mining and resettlement for years. There they will engage in civil disobedience to stop the digging in one of Europe's biggest open-pit lignite mines, which the Swedish company Vattenfall has put up for sale. The action will involve blockading the excavators in the pit and also blockading the coal trains which deliver coal to two power plants in the area. The action will show any future buyer that all coal development will face resistance, and demonstrate the movement's commitment to a different kind of energy system that prioritizes people and the planet over corporate power and profit.

There's never been a bigger wave of actions against the plans of the fossil fuel industry. Communities on the front lines of climate change aren't waiting for governments to act they are doing it themselves. The only way to tackle climate change is through a rapid and socially just transition to 100% renewable energy, keeping oil, coal and gas in the ground.

Naomi Klein has said: “The global climate justice movement is rising fast. But so are the oceans. So are global temperatures. This is a race against time. Our movement is stronger than ever, but to beat the odds, we have to grow stronger.”

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May Boeve the director of 350.org said that “By backing campaigns and mass actions aimed at stopping the world’s most dangerous fossil-fuel projects – from coal plants in Turkey and the Philippines, to mines in Germany and Australia, to fracking in Brazil and oil wells in Nigeria – Break Free hopes to eliminate the power and pollution of the fossil-fuel industry, and propel the world toward a sustainable future”.

In Britain the first action has already taken place in South Wales on from April 30-May 3. The Reclaim the Power network brought together several hundred people at the UK’s largest opencast coal mine at Ffos-y-fran near Merthyr Tydfil. Over 300 hundred activists blockaded the mine for 12 hours and brought it to a halt in the biggest ever mass action at a coal mine in Britain.

The Campaign Against Climate Change and others have called a series of protests around the country under the slogan “going backwards on climate change” which is a reference to the wholesale retreat the Cameron government is making on the meagre climate policies that have been adopted in recent years over the weekend May 7-8.