

As temperatures soar, governments abandon pledges to fight climate change

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Temperature records are being broken around the world as a global heat wave grips four continents, putting the world on track for the hottest summer in over 2,000 years.

Cities around the world are suffering through temperatures above 40° C (104° F), with excessive heat in Mecca alone killing at least 1,000 people attending the Hajj pilgrimage.

Through this dangerous heat, millions of workers are forced to continue laboring in sweltering temperatures. Workers in the United States who spoke with the WSWS reported working through temperatures reaching well over 100° F (37.7° C) without air conditioning or even fans.

The heat wave is partially attributable to El Niño, a warming cycle that brings hotter temperatures around the world. But climate scientists have noted that the extreme heat has been made far more likely by climate change.

Last year, 2023, was the hottest year on record, with 2024 already exceeding last year's temperatures. The past 11 months were the hottest recorded in history, reaching more than 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial averages.

A warming planet, even by just a few degrees on average, has massive effects on the environment. The threshold of 1.5 degrees is a critical milestone. Scientists have projected that if average global temperatures remain 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, climate change may become irreversible and fuel even more severe natural disasters.

Johan Rockström, joint director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, told Earth.org in April:

[W]hat happened in 2023 was nothing close to 2016, the second-warmest year on record. It was beyond anything we expected, and no climate models can reproduce what happened. And then 2024 starts, and it gets even warmer. We cannot explain these [trends] yet, and it makes scientists that work on Earth resilience like myself very nervous.

Already, global warming has had devastating consequences throughout the world. The World Meteorological Organization reported last year that a staggering 489,000 people died from heat-related causes every year between 2000 and 2019—or nearly 10 million people over two decades.

In the face of runaway global temperatures, capitalist governments are moving to abandon their meager and insufficient climate pledges altogether. Scotland, which pledged to reduce emissions by 75 percent by 2030, scrapped the entire program in April.

On June 3, Germany's climate adviser declared that the country's limited climate goals of 30 percent reductions for 2030 were out of reach.

In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak criticized climate goals as “unaffordable eco-zealotry,” while UK Labour leader Keir Starmer dropped his proposal for a 28 billion pound (\$35.3 billion) per year green energy program.

These developments follow the COP 28 climate summit last December, when government officials and corporate executives met in the United Arab Emirates. The event was chaired by Sultan Ahmed al-Jaber, the CEO of the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), effectively turning it into a trade show for the fossil fuel industry.

The moves by governments to abandon climate pledges are mirrored in the corporate world. Shell dropped its 2035 climate pledge in March, while Bank of America abandoned its pledge to not fund new coal mines or power plants. The Science Based Targets Initiative dropped hundreds of companies, including Microsoft, JBS and Unilever, from its validation process for failing to meet their climate pledges.

The abandonment of climate initiatives is happening at the same time the US and NATO escalate the imperialist war against Russia over Ukraine. The endless diversion of funds for war has put all remaining climate programs on the chopping block. As one NPR headline put it:

“The U.S. pledged billions to fight climate change. Then came the Ukraine war.”

Just as the capitalist governments subordinated elementary public health measures to profit in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are neither willing nor able to take any serious measures to halt and reverse climate change. Capitalism has normalized mass death by allowing mass infection with COVID-19, and it is now normalizing runaway climate change and the rendering of the earth as unlivable.

Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore issued a statement on X/Twitter yesterday, in which he said:

The basic issue, denied by the various middle-class environmental movements and parties like the Greens, is capitalism. It is impossible to address the increasingly dire reality of global warming within the framework of a social and economic system based on profit. Moreover, the solution to climate change must necessarily be global and therefore is incompatible with the increasingly archaic nation-state system.

internationally in the process of production, whose interests lie in the abolition of the capitalist nation-state system.

A solution to climate change requires a frontal assault on the wealth of the capitalist oligarchs and their control over the economy. An emergency response to the environmental catastrophe must begin with the expropriation of the global energy giants under the democratic control of the working class.

The giant banks and corporations must be expropriated and the resources of society mobilized to finance an emergency program to produce energy in a way that can meet social needs while protecting the environment, including a massive social investment in alternative forms of energy and public transportation.

It is not through appeals to the capitalist state and its political representatives that a solution to the climate crisis can be found, but through the mobilization of the international working class against the capitalist system and the struggle to replace this obsolete and irrational social system with socialism.



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He continued:

Resolving the climate crisis is fundamentally a class question. The impact of the climate crisis falls primarily on the workers of the world. Moreover, it is the working class, united