

Countering Dangerous Narratives in Dangerous Times

A MEMO ON COMMUNICATING CLIMATE AND MIGRATION IN THE NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT

The global advance of hard-right forces presents an acute challenge to the climate movement.

With Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the EU is at risk of backsliding on its [Green Deal](#). Climate delay and denial is resurging and the climate consensus we believed we had achieved is fracturing.

Climate campaigners are asking how we got here, and, in some cases, if it is possible to appeal to hard-right governments to stay the climate course.

Some climate campaigners are tempted to argue that climate action can help meet Trumpian priorities, like migration control. The Right will act, they say, if we convince them that decarbonisation, climate resilience funding, and the provision of green jobs abroad can prevent climate-linked migration.

Others have argued that it isn't strategic for the climate movement to be associated with migrant human rights campaigners in these times.

Check the [Guide to Countering Dangerous Narratives](#) (2024, full version)



Key resources

[The risks of securitising climate-driven migration in a new Trump era](#) Alex Randall

[Post-Disaster Climate Migration Messaging Guide](#) (2024)

[The Climate Security Narrative Toolkit](#) (Common Defense)

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As organisations who have worked on climate and migration for over a decade, we must say clearly: **this approach does not work.**

- Raising the fear of climate-induced migration [demonstrably does not convince conservatives](#) to support climate action.
- Raising fears of climate-induced migration will not be met with increased budget for climate action, but with more funding for border militarisation.
- Border spending has already directly taken funding from climate spending. With migration control budgets running to hundreds of billions, and the [border industry](#) lobbying as hard as the [oil industry](#) does for special treatment, this looks set to get worse.
- The hard-right's violent border policies [do not reduce migration](#) and mostly are not intended to – they are about using border violence to polarise politics and build their base. This is another reason why the argument that climate action reduces migration does not work on them.

As the impacts of climate change become a more violent force in people's lives, our two movements need to connect to more – not fewer – people's experience of climate change.

And whilst most people prefer to stay at home, or to move to safe areas nearest their homes, climate and migration are indeed increasingly linked. It is the climate movement's role to point out:

- False and harmful rhetoric about migration is being used by hard-right governments to divert attention from the real and immediate threat of climate impacts. While their allies in the arms, border, and war industries benefit, we all lose.
- Solidarity is crucial in the face of a climate crisis that impacts all of us in different ways. People forced from their homes by climate change impacts in the West – from California wildfires to Italian droughts – have more in common with people fleeing climate change impacts around the world than they do with those in power. Climate campaigners in the Global North should be supporting, not blocking, the right of people both to stay in their homes and the [right to move](#) to safety as climate impacts deepen.
- Everyone – at home and abroad – loses from climate breakdown. And all our societies and economies win from taking action to secure a safe and liveable world for the future.

DO

Do point out the dangers involved in prioritising migration control over climate action.

Example: "Whilst governments waste tens of billions on hiring profiteers for border control and deportations, we are all left to deal with the consequences of wildfires, droughts, and bad harvests."

DON'T

Don't frame climate action as a form of migration control or adaptation finance as a way to prevent people migrating.