Transcript

Climate Action: A Role for Civil Disobedience?

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Fiona Harvey

Can you all hear me? Good, the mic is working. I'm Fiona Harvey. I'm the Environment Correspondent at The Guardian newspaper and I've been writing about the environment since 2004. So, there's been quite a lot of environment in that time and now, even more so, because now we have the new activism on climate change. We have things like extinction rebellion. We have some upswell of support for direct action on climate change. We have Greta Thunberg and the school climate strikes. So, we are seeing activism in a different way than we have before, which is very interesting and very exciting, but it does raise questions about what is the role of civil disobedience in climate change. So, in a moment, I'm going to open the meeting, but just to let you know first of all a little bit about the format. We are on the record. This event is being livestreamed. You can also – you can tweet, so the Twitter hashtag is #CHEvents should you wish to use it, please do, though while you're tweeting, if you could make sure that your phones are on silent, so that we don't literally tweet at us. We've got staff here, in case anybody needs them.

And just to go through the format of the event, I'm going to introduce our wonderful speakers here today, who are going to give us perspectives from the UK and around the world, from an activism perspective and from perspective of, you know, what this means, in terms of public debate and how we carry on public debate. And also, what this means, in terms of the effect on climate change, is this actually going to be some kind of step change in how we deal with mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, and how we deal with adapting to climate change, giving ourselves greater resilience. So, all of those questions are going to be addressed and I'm going to take, first of all, I'm going to introduce you to Daze. Daze Aghaji is a climate activist and student. She's actually at Goldsmiths University, studying history and politics. And you were – so you stood in the European elections, under the label Climate and Ecological Emergency Incident, I'm sorry, Independent. Now, I don't know about that, so if you can tell us a little bit about that and a bit about your activism and why?

Daze Aghaji

Yeah. So I did stand as a candidate for the European elections. With the current climate of Brexit, I understand it's very important and we do need to sort it. However, the climate crisis is literally a life and death situation, so it was basically on the emphasis of, I didn't want the election just to be about Brexit. I wanted there to be space – like a space had been open from April and the Extinction Rebellion protests and the youth strikes and it was like, I didn't want that space to be closed because of everyone forgetting that we are in, like, immediate danger now. So, standing up with a couple of other people, as well as climate and ecological independents, it was to bring a new face to politics and additionally, to help keep talking about the climate crisis, so, yeah.

I do think civil disobedience is really, really vital at this point, as like, I stress, it's all about urgency at this point. We're at a stage of where we have had 30 years to do the typical protests and the typical asking the Politicians to do something. And then now, when, like, the IPCC report is saying we've got 11 years to do something, it places emphasis on, we can't wait for the Politicians to be, like, this is what we'll give you. We have to be, like, you guys are not taking care of us the way that we have agreed through things like the Social Contract. And now that that is void we are going to rebel and that's why I think civil disobedience is the way forward at this point.

Fiona Harvey

And what does rebellion mean in that context?
Daze Aghaji

Rebellion means causing a havoc. Yeah, it’s essentially just making sure that it’s a very visible form of protest. So, obviously, I understand the rebellion was annoying for loads of people, and that was not the intent to annoy average people. But it was to really make the Government realise people are prepared to put their civil liberty at stake for this, and that’s how important it is. So, it’s kind of just say like, I put myself, as especially being in the UK and knowing that I won’t get killed for protesting. I will give up that privilege and put myself on the frontline to protest ‘cause it’s not just about the UK, it’s about the world, so it’s a lot bigger that what we think it is.

Fiona Harvey

Yes, well, climate change activists and environmental activists around the world do put their lives in danger. We have seen that. In fact, at The Guardian, we’ve played a role in documenting that. So, why do you feel so strongly about this, though? What has it done and what has happened, you know, recently, what has been done that has sparked such an uprising of interest?

Daze Aghaji

I think it’s mostly, there’s just been this kind of urgency, especially from younger people where we’re actually finding out there is a truth where this is no longer theory, this is actually happening right now, especially in places like The Global South. And it’s like we are seeing it happen and we have almost been like blind-sighted to the point of people tell us it doesn’t exist and it’s like it’s – this is almost like a reaction of, like, coming cathartic, like, cathartic and just, like, releasing all of this emotion and being, like, okay, now we know we have basically been lied to, and that’s unacceptable anymore, and saying it’s unacceptable and actually doing something to hold the people to account. So, yeah, I think ‘cause even I live on New Cross Road, which is one of the most polluted roads in London and I wasn’t even told. And I feel like it would have changed a lot of people’s opinion on living on that road and knowing you’re breathing in toxic levels of air pollution, but we’re always not told. And then now it’s like we actually have to say, you have to tell us these things, you have to let us know and you have to allow us to be able to make positive decisions that will actually help to end this, ‘cause it can be ended.

Fiona Harvey

And so that of course, is not a climate change issue in itself though, what you’ve just mentioned is now a pollution issue. Do you think that people are actually taking action, across a range of environmental issues, or indeed, that climate action is seen as a sort of proxy for a whole load of environmental issues, such as air pollution and water pollution and plastics, you know, the other damaging things we’re doing to the environment?

Daze Aghaji

Yeah, I feel like we have to stop thinking of environmentalism as, like, loads of single issues and start thinking of it as very holistic and together, because only if we see it that way, we can actually provide change, ‘cause like let’s say we do get rid of all the plastic, we still have so many issues. So we have to be facing all issues, at the same time, rather than focusing on one and moving onto the other ‘cause we don’t have time for that anymore.
Fiona Harvey

Thank you very much, thank you. We’ll move on next, welcome, Farhana. We’ve got Farhana Yamin, who I will introduce you. She is a – an Associate Director, sorry, an Associate...

Farhana Yamin

Fellow.

Fiona Harvey

...Fellow here. Sorry, I promoted you, I think, at Chatham House in the Energy, Environment and Resources Department, also an internationally renowned Lawyer on environmental issues. You’ve been advising leaders, in various countries as well, and so you were also at the World Economic Forum, advising rich people how to look at the climate.

Farhana Yamin

Oh, that was a very small role, in the run up to Paris and afterwards, yeah.

Fiona Harvey

But do you see yourself as a Lawyer and as an activist on two sides of a divide here?

Farhana Yamin

And so my key, you know, takeaway for you guys is, add the word ‘activism’ to your CV, to your life, to your everyday undertaking, and I think that’s what being a rebel really means, is doing something differently and thinking differently. Because it’s all of our lives collectively, professional and individual that, you know, that is business as usual, so if you want to change, add the word ‘activist’ to yourself, and that’s what I’ve done, so I haven’t given up being a Lawyer. I was working full-time at Extinction Rebellion from November until May, and I’m slightly reducing my time because it’s like a – it’s quite a crazy place to be, right? So you have to take a little bit of breath every now and then and focus on what has been achieved and reflect on that and actually, the activism that Extinction Rebellion sort of brought together, you know, with the Youth Strike Movement, with millions of students marching in the streets, including here, with the FridaysForFuture. The energy and the vision of the Sunrise Movement, which was pushing for a Green New Deal and is, you know, still very active and, you know, increasing rapidly in its popularity here.

All of these things sort of culminated with a set of factors, which were largely outside our control, like good weather and the fact that it didn’t rain during that April period, and produced, I think, something kind of very catalysing and energising. And I don’t know, sort of a product, you know, there’s a very heavy duty drain cleaner called Cillit Bang, you know, which you have to use if you’re really – if your drains get really clogged. And I feel like Extinction Rebellion was almost like the Cillit Bang that the Environment Movement needed to unblock a lot of messed up energy in the system and sort of almost toxic things that we weren’t talking about. So I think the two – the three demands, telling the truth, including telling the truth to us ourselves about where we really were in the policy and the political and the economic cycle, was very important. You know, saying actually, emissions needed to be reduced now, the demand by [inaudible – 10:46] 2025, and actually, the reason for that is so that we focus on the period now, like
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And I think finally, you know, for me as a Lawyer, it’s not enough just to be out on the streets and to, you know, be engaged in civil disobedience, I sort of needed a rule based alternative, so Extinction Rebellion really have elevated the understanding of the new deliberative democracy that we need. So they’ve promoted and championed the concept of citizens assemblies, which are formal, you know, a theme in democracy basically, as Michael Gove, in this meeting, uh-huh, went, “Yes, a theme in democracy, that’s what you’re promoting.” It says there’s something in there sortition based, citizens chosen by lot who then decide on the basis of expert advice available to them, what should be done. And I feel that that is a very important compliment that needs to supplement our political system, which has been unable to put forward and act on the interests of our nation, let alone the interests of the planet, let alone the interests of, you know, young people like Daze, who will bear the consequences, in real terms, of climate change, you know, we will still benefit. I don’t know how old you are, you know, Fiona. But I think our generation is still benefitting from an economic cycle, and we’ve imposed a huge cost to this generation by eating up essentially, the entire carbon budget. That’s what that curve means of emissions declining now like this.

There is no budget left for them. So, yeah, that’s what motivated me to, you know, throw myself at the Shell building and glue myself there. It was also recognition that I felt that some parts of what I had been working on, on some legal tools weren’t actually, I wasn’t really telling the truth about them. Because they take a lot of time, like litigation takes a lot of time. We need litigation, so litigating against Shell is absolutely necessary, but actually, I felt if maybe Shell Executives would listen more, if I glued myself to their building and said, “Please stop,” and that’s a much faster, quicker route, and that’s what civil disobedience is all about, is making that slightly shorter connection.

Fiona Harvey

Yeah, because the focus on 2050 that we have from governments and targets and indeed, things like, you know, international agreements, that does leave a massive gap. But just before I let you go, because I want to just – as a Lawyer, I’d like to get your view on the meaning of civil disobedience as a legal concept, what status, what standing does it have in law?

Farhana Yamin

Well, peaceful civil disobedience, I totally champion that, means taking – breaking one law, but submitting yourself to the legal process, actually, that’s what it means. That you disobey one law, but you submit yourself publicly and to the oversight of the judicial system and the point is, to use the legal system to show a much great injustice, and civil disobedience has a very longstanding pedigree, both in this country and, you know, think of the Civil Rights Movement, the Feminist Movement, the Suffragettes Movement, the Gay Rights Movement, the Chartists, you know, I could go on and on. Actually, virtually, every liberty, you know, including free speech and the right to research, every single liberty that you can think of has been gained actually, as a result of mass protests and some civil disobedience or other. Then I think very much as an Academic and a Researcher, I guess I came to that understanding, or re-came to that understanding after having, I guess, you know, the bulk of my life was spent, until last year, you know, on research, my academic work, my teachings, my writing, reading the work of colleagues here, amazing work, and insights. And I just felt that those insights weren’t then being taken up, those – that truth that we were saying that the change was necessary, that it was urgent and that solutions were abundant and now are economically far cheaper, wasn’t being heard. So, time for civil disobedience to, you know, make – sound the alarm bell a bit louder.
Fiona Harvey

And when you talk about civil disobedience involving breaking one law, what laws is it acceptable to break, in terms of looking at the climate?

Farhana Yamin

Yeah, you know, that’s a really good question ‘cause we’re having a lot of that debate in Extinction Rebellion right now. So, for me, it’s very important that I don’t endanger others, okay? So, for me, that’s a really important criteria, that yes, disruption is okay, but I don’t want to endanger other people, so that’s the line that I feel I draw on what is peaceful civil disobedience. So, by and large, the actions in November, the actions in April, the laws that were breached were trespass, essentially, and public nuisance, and serious disruption to local communities, and in my case, I risked criminal damage. That’s my arrest charge for supergluing myself to the Shell building and that’s okay, ‘cause that’s kind of a criminal damage that didn’t endanger anybody else’s life, you know, so I draw the line there. That’s the line that I would draw and I think that’s the container for peaceful civil disobedience. So there are hundreds of laws, you could break that. But I think the essential criteria is to match that essential quality that you’re taking a risk with your reputation, your life, your liberty, and drawing attention to a higher cause. You’re not going out there, you know, imposing that requirement on anyone else, you’re just hoping that, you know, I hope that that courage and braveness in sacrificing your own life as usual is inspiring for others and that they understand that – well, for me, I hope that people understand that you have to be pretty – yeah, you have to have come to a certain point and I feel my 30 years of being a Lawyer in the Climate Movement, I’ve got to that point. And I think you guys all need to understand that those conversations, including many, many conferences, gosh, how many conferences do we – have had at Chatham House, how many panels, how many roundtables, how many times have you invited industry, and they’re not hearing?

Fiona Harvey

No, yeah. Well, that’s really powerful. Just before I let you go, do you think that people should be arrested for these acts of civil disobedience, is that part of the point, must they be arrested?

Farhana Yamin

Well, they have been arrested now. A lot of people haven’t been formally charged, so – and then, from the charge to being actually taken to court and being put on trial and then being, you know, convicted or, you know, not – found not guilty, that’s quite a long process. So, a lot of the activists who – 1,000 – it’s nearly 1,200, who were arrested in April, have not been charged and currently there are different things that we’re hearing. Some are saying, you know, “It’s a priority to charge these people,” in which involves a huge amount of work for the Police and for the Prosecution Services. So, I’m perfectly prepared and happy to be charged. I don’t particularly want to go and be arrested all over again, so – and I feel it was important for me, in that particular case, the action was to highlight the crime of ecocide and the work of Polly Higgins, who had been campaigning against Shell and the major oil companies. I feel they have a particular accountability deficit, to put it mildly. So, for me, it is important to have my day in court. I would like that because I think it’s important to say the truth.

That many of these companies, the big oil and gas companies have known for nearly 40 years, some of them, of the extent of damages and have run a set of campaigns and actions that have not resulted in action that they could have undertaken. Sometimes they have done a bit more actually, and then gone
backwards, you know, like Lord Browne, for example, at BP, you know. And, in many cases, they’re using, you know, the tiny fraction, you know, if you look at a pie chart and just imagine a tiny sliver worth five minutes, that is the extent of their green investment. And yet, you know, we’re sort of led to believe that the other 95 is green, and that’s again, a real reason why I kind of felt, we can’t carry on with that distorted way of, you know, these guys using media, lobbying, and serious lobbying power to give this image that they’re greening fast enough, they’re just not. So, yeah, I would – it’s a matter for the Police and for the Crown Prosecution Service to decide what to do. But I think, frankly, the fact that every single party met with Extinction Rebellion, the week after the rebellion ended. So we had meetings with Michael Gove and colleagues from the Treasury, we had meetings with the Green Party. We had meetings with Labour, including the Shadow Cabinet, all of that political work is continuing, would I hope, you know, signal to those who are taking that decision that actually, this was a legitimate issue around which to protest.

Fiona Harvey

Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you for that, that’s enormously interesting and insightful, thank you. We’re going to move onto Sam. Sam Geall is Associate Fellow also at the Energy, Environment and Resources Department here at Chatham House. But you’re going to give us an international perspective, Sam, and Sam is actually Executive Editor of Chinadialogue.net, which I’m sure you’re aware of, and I think you’re also in the University of Sussex, in their Science Policy Research Unit. So, we’ve seen quite a lot of protests going on in China at present, and so how do we relate that to the rest of the world?

Doctor Sam Geall

I mean, I suppose the thing to think about is the very different context in which – or a very different political context in which environmental activism occurs in other countries and, you know, I would argue actually, it gives a particular moral urgency and valence to what Daze and Farhana are doing, to be honest, given the more open political opportunity space we have here to perform civil disobedience, you know, safely, in a non-violent fashion, without immediately facing violent clampdown, in most cases. It gives a particular kind of urgency and seriousness and responsibility on citizens here to really act in that way. I mean, well, I guess why, just to sort of zoom out and think about why I think it is particularly urgent now? You know, like you, like Farhana, I’ve been working on these issues for, you know, 15 – at least 15 years or so, sort of watching different sort of climate negotiations, watching the failure of Copenhagen, watching the success, you know, in 2009, watching the success of the Paris Agreement in 2015. And the, you know, historic agreement of 190 countries to, you know, commit the world to a 2° pathway, with efforts to go to 1.5 and the, you know, the historic kind of moment of co-operation and diplomacy that represented.

But also, seeing that even if we were on track for that agreement to, you know, for all of those countries who made those pledges were on track, which they’re not, we would still be heading for a 3°, possibly a 4° world, and we’re not even track on, you know, on the terms of that agreement itself, given the election of Donald Trump and the consequent kind of leadership vacuum, in terms of climate diplomacy, the fragmentation of the European Union, the lack of any kind of real global leadership there. There is an urgency and a need and a responsibility actually, for civil society, for grassroots, for bottom up kind of mobilisation to demand greater ambition, to demand leadership, and just to actually to create that space in that context, but of course, actually in many – particularly in The Global South there’s really a closing space for civil society.
As you mentioned, you know, The Guardian’s been good at reporting this Global Witness, comes out every year with a tally of the, you know, the toll faced by environmental defenders around the world. 2017, I think, was the most dangerous year on record for environmental defenders. 2017 environment defenders murdered. The greatest share of those were in Brazil, now under Jair Bolsonaro, an authoritarian populist in the vane of others like Rodrigo Duterte, in the Philippines and that was the, you know, the second most dangerous country to be an environmental defender last year. You know, people like Gloria Capitan, anti-coal activist, 57-year-old woman, murdered in front of her grandson for opposing coal fired power plants. You have, you know, a steady toll, which goes hand-in-hand with the stigmatisation and the sort of defamation of activists by authoritarian governments. So this – there’s a kind of disturbingly similar pattern emerging in a number of countries around the world, where essentially, rights to land and to natural resources are granted, often to private corporations. When communities raise their voices, in response to this, they find that they’re, you know, stigmatised, that they’re called anti-development, they’re called anti-growth, they’re called agents of foreign influence, often called terrorists. And not only violently threatened but also, often, legally persecuted, and the other thing that’s increasing and an increasingly similar and disturbing pattern is the use of laws like laws on registration of foreign NGOs or foreign agents registration, these sorts of things.

In order to gradually stigmatise and delegitimise peaceful non-violent protest and community opposition to the incursion of land rights or environmental rights, the opposition to coal fired power, to siting petrochemical plants, to dams and all of these large kind of protests – large kinds of projects. I mean, in places like China where, you know, my work is focused, the environment has tended to be more of a permitted space, typically, for protest. It’s tended, historically, to be somewhere that you can have a more open discussion around governance, rights, than you would in, you know, if you’re directly talking about electoral reform or other kinds of rights issues. But the space really around the world, including in China, has begun to shrink, particularly with the influence of these sorts of laws. In China, for example, there’s a law on foreign NGO registration that essentially, puts all environmental NGOs under the direct supervision of the security services, the security stay. So you have this sort of shrinking space, and it’s in that context where, as I mentioned, I think there’s a particular kind of moral responsibility for actors who have that political opportunity space to raise their voices.

And it’s why I support what, you know, XR and those kinds of folks are doing, and I also think it’s why it resonates and I think it’s why it resonates globally, precisely because they’re making such a strong moral argument. They’re not framing it, in terms of the – in terms of say the carbon budget necessarily, in terms of the economics, while I think there are strong economic arguments, I do think there are, you know, we can make the arguments from those – that perspective. And they’re making a very strong moral argument about the rights of future generations, about the absolute global injustice that’s being inflicted on The Global South by the, you know, those nations that are the great historical emitters. And by the injustice on future generations, you know, just as one last thought that came up while Daze was speaking, I also live just up the New Cross Road, we briefly discussed this. I have a three-year-old son who his entire life has been breathing that same particular matter and it’s an enormous, you know, intergenerational justice issue that he’s going to be growing up in, you know, in that world. And, you know, talking actually locally to, you know, ‘cause if you have kids, you’re talking to lots of people who are outside of your bubble. There was really universal support locally about the actions on air pollution that we’ll take, ‘cause there are a number of Extinction Rebellion actions, shutting down the roads just around there. And there was universal support for that because it’s, you know, because it’s obvious because it’s what we’re breathing and, you know, I’m, as a result, very supportive of actions that – where people are raising their voices in places where they can.
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Fiona Harvey

Thank you, yes, and where do you – do you see any examples in The Global South that you’d like to pick out of really successful activism or civil disobedience campaigns?

Doctor Sam Geall

So, I mean, air pollution is a good one to pick up and it’s a good place to talk about actually, where you can find those kind of co-benefits and find things that do make change successfully. So, you know, in Beijing, starting about late 2011, there was a series of really intense smog events. There were – people often refer to it as the airpocalypse, you know, around the winter each year 2011/2012, you got smog that lasted for weeks that was so intense that often, you know, planes couldn’t take off. You had, you know, barely visibility to see above, you know, the first or second storey buildings and, you know, roads were having to be closed and so on. And there was an enormous outcry about this that focused not only on just the level of smog itself, but on the lack of Government transparency around the reporting of it.

There was, essentially the Beijing Government was collecting data on the larger form of particulate matter, PM10, but they weren’t – they were collecting, but they weren’t showing the data on PM2.5, which is the really tiny particulate matter that lodges deep in the lungs and is really hazardous to health. This became a real public outcry. People were saying, “Release the data on this.” The – actually, the US Embassy were releasing that data on their Twitter feed and people were able to make comparisons, essentially, between the number of so-called blue sky days that were being released by Government and actually, what it looked like when you really were factoring in the – this data. And it was a successful campaign. You had a huge online campaign of, you know, of sort of essentially middleclass netizens, you know, online citizens in China demanding release of this data. You had people like – there were students in a university – in some of the universities in Beijing, who were putting small pollution monitors on kites, Bluetooth connected, flying kites up in the air and creating this kind of mobile dataset of air pollution, doing essentially citizen science projects, putting that data online, essentially, making a kind of a comparison of what was being released and the Government actually listened in this case. They started releasing the data online very quickly. There’s now actually very good real time monitoring of air pollution data across Chinese cities, better than there is here, actually. And it did then lead to increased action on air pollution and that, in turn, has really been one of the major drivers for climate mitigation actions in China, has been one of the things that’s really underpinned a lot of the climate policy that we’ve been seeing, you know, that’s become state policy in China.

Fiona Harvey

Yeah.

Farhana Yamin

Yeah, I just wanted to add that actually, you know, in developing countries, many of the campaigns and advocacy work, even though it’s very, very difficult, is around water, rights to water, which, you know, you die without water in 36 hours. So, actually, whilst climate change is an existential threat, a lot of the immediate campaigning and priority is around other issues, and that work has been taken forward. It’s about the issues of defending your land, it’s about defending your forest, it’s about campaigning against extractive industries. So, a lot of the campaigning power, you know, which is extremely tough, and very, very difficult to do, is being undertaken at a very frontline set of activities and threats. And you have to really understand, I feel, that in some cases, the time for protest is over, people are marching with their
feet as huge swaths of, you know, essentially, this belt, desiccates and becomes virtually uninhabitable. So, all of North Africa, Yemen, going all the way into South America, climate impacts essentially, around that part of the world, that belt where rain patterns have changed very profoundly already: Lake Chad, Yemen, Sudan, you know, we could go on, Latin America, Ecuador, Honduras. All of those countries where, actually, the story that you’re hearing is of intense conflict, wars and migration, those are climate related, when you look at what the underlying drivers are of why those people are on the march, why they’re leaving their homes, that is protest. That’s people marching with their feet, literally, to go and build another life and often, you know, doing so on the back of very dangerous journeys out of those regions.

So I want to make that point because sometimes, you know, you’re looking for the counterpart, we’re looking for the counterpart of XR. We’re looking for the counterpart of a, you know, NGO type campaigns and actually, they’re very – they look very different. The resistance in those countries and protest looks very different. And just very quickly, there is a huge number of very positive legal challenges going on, which are resulting in shutting down of mines, which are resulting in shutting down of coal stations, which are resulting in air quality standards. And, you know, I’m from Pakistan, and I’ve just heard Judge Muhammad Saeed, who is Lahore High Court Judge, who actually has made Pakistan’s Government establish a climate policy, basically. And through basically by issuing a mandamus judgement saying, you know, implement and design a policy, and he’s got an open order, which means that at any time a citizen can go to him and say, “Look, I don’t know what’s happening, I don’t know who to contact.” And the legal courts will help him, the legal process will help him, so there’s a huge amount of creative resistance going on and it always has been there, we just don’t sometimes see it as much, and I would love The Guardian to report more of it. Thank you.

Fiona Harvey

Yes. No, that’s very important. I’m just going to bring Daze in at this point because I’d like to ask what activists and rebels in the UK can do to forge these links internationally, around the world with other people who are doing similar things?

Daze Aghaji

Yeah, actually, weirdly enough, within XR Youth I’m a Co-ordinator for Outreach and underneath that, it actually goes into international solidarity. So what we’re doing, within XR Youth, is that we’re creating links with other climate activists all across the globe, because a lot of the time, like Extinction Rebellion obviously, I think is amazing. But we know that people have been doing this for way longer than us and we can have, like, a really good exchange with them on finding out what they’re doing and how, like, we can help and how they can help us as well. Also, one of the things that we’ve been looking at is maybe having a real emphasis on accountability for governments, so if something happens to climate defenders in different countries, we can come out and go to the Embassies and say, “This isn’t okay.” And we’re here, we’re overseeing this, we can see it as like we have the privilege to walk up to an Embassy and launch a complaint. We can say, “Yes, we can see what you guys are doing.” And that holds that level of accountability, I feel like is really essential when it comes to making sure that everyone remains, almost like have like a basic level of protection while doing this.

Fiona Harvey

Yeah. Yeah, that’s really good, and do you think that there are lessons that the UK campaigns can learn from overseas?
Daze Aghaji

A 100%, a 100%. Yeah, I feel like especially when, like, the two partner groups I work with the most is XR Youth Germany and XR Youth Mexico and Mexico is one of – like, is one of the most dangerous places to defend the climate. And we learn so much by the courage that they have to put themselves out as young people, the youngest in that group being 13, to really put themselves in actual life and death danger because of the climate. So it’s like there is so much of an exchange that the UK can learn from other places.

Fiona Harvey

Okay. I mean, some people would, you know, they would sharply intake their breath at that, that someone of 13 was putting themselves in danger. I mean, you know, one might feel that that was going a bit far.

Daze Aghaji

Yeah, a 100% ‘cause obviously, that is something that we told him. We was like, “You know this is very dangerous.” But when I spoke to him and told him that, like, this is really dangerous, there’s a climate activist that dies every week in Mexico and he said, “It’s come to a point where I can’t stand and sit there and do nothing anymore.” And I feel like the fact that young people have been pushed to the edge of where that’s happening; in our Extinction Rebellion group, the youngest is ten. So it’s like these kids have been pushed to the extent of they just say like, “We cannot take this anymore.” And I think that’s almost more reason the Government should do something, ‘cause it shouldn’t be our place. I should be a typical 19-year-old going clubbing and I’m not. You know, so it’s like we shouldn’t have even been put in this place, but at this time it is our futures. We’re going to be the ones who are going to have to sort this out, and I would prefer to stop it before it gets to the point of needing to sort it out.

Fiona Harvey

Okay, thank you. Thank you very much. Right, at that point, I think it’s appropriate to open to the floor ‘cause we’ve heard some very interesting and some controversial things there. I can see a colleague with the microphone is there, so I’ll take – I can see three questions at present, so if we could take the microphone here and then I’ll go here, here.

William Crawley

And thank you very much, my name’s William Crawley. I’m a Member of Chatham House. I’d like to ask two questions briefly, if I may. First, we’re often told that it is the younger generation that are going to bear the brunt of the decisions that we’re making now and climate change is one thing. Just the other day, there was a panel here, in which one of the members of the panel said, “Well, of course, my granddad had opinions about this, that, and the other, which were terrible reactionary, and we should ignore those.” My question is, do you think it would be a good idea politically to create a constituency in which you have to be under 40 or under 45, or something like that, to make decisions?

My other question, if I may is, Miss Yamin, is directly not related to climate change, but to civil disobedience. Do you think that the degree of violence involved in the Hong Kong demonstrations was justifiable or should be supported by the British Government?
Fiona Harvey

Okay, thank you. Thank you for that. I'll give you a chance to answer that in a second. We'll take this question here and then this one, and we'll ask them all.

Andre Sagodac

Hello, Andre Sagodac from National Institute for African Studies, and we are researching now the Fulani herders that migrate southward from Northern Nigeria, armed with machine guns, due to desertification, which is directly linked to climate change. And we are posing a question is, how long do we have until the global communities commit themselves to making a security – global security issue? And can climate change unite the world leaders or make a global apathy that as Damian Carrington said in The Guardian, in his recent article, where the richest have – will have their space, so yeah, can the climate change be a unifying issue? Yeah.

Fiona Harvey

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for that intervention, and sir.

Simon Holmes

Simon Holmes, I'm also a Member of the Chatham House. A question for – in relation to Extinction Rebellion, how has it really been getting the right demographic mix? It seems to be something of quite a loner 'cause it doesn’t want to be seen perhaps like the gilets jaunes in France as a sort of rent-a-mob. On the other hand, the more it’s been successful and very successful in engaging with young people, middleclass and people who are professionals, and so forth, essentially been branded as something of a sort of elitist and curiosity, “Oh, well, they can afford to rebel about these things.” How is it doing in getting the right broad mix of the population?

Fiona Harvey

Okay, thank you. Thank you, that’s an important question there. In fact, we might choose to take that first and then go onto the others. What’s your impression of the demographic mix?

Daze Aghaji

I can’t lie, it is very Caucasian. It is very Caucasian, it is very middleclass, but at the same time, it’s – the environmental even as a whole has been like that for a while and even just having me and Farhana, are kind of just...

Farhana Yamin

We’re kind of diverse.

Daze Aghaji

Very diverse.
Farhana Yamin

And we are, we're diverse.

Daze Aghaji

This is the change of realising what makes people not feel included in environmental activism, and we've done – within XR Youth we have done workshops on knowing like your privilege and talking about why it may not be seen as an inclusive space for all. And also, focus groups, so the people who wouldn’t necessarily see themselves as environmentalist or feel like they can join us and why can’t they? There is a certain element of privilege, in the extent of like some people do have the privilege to be able to miss like three weeks off work to go and sleep in Marble Arch, and some people economically can’t do that. So, it’s – I can’t give you like a straight answer ‘cause there isn’t one. But I think it’s an emphasis on understanding the right as being, especially of being white and of being middleclass that this is the privilege that you should be using, in the space of other people who don’t have the same privilege as you. And also, an emphasis on still creating and asking questions and opening up that conversation, so it can be inclusive for everyone.

And it’s once we start getting those conversations and like, for example, in the campaign I went to a Council estate in Hackney and we did a talk and just talking about the environmental issues. And it’s like they were talking about how, like, it’s education based, how it’s like they feel like their schools are majorly underfunded. And it’s because of that they’re not learning about things like this or they don’t have the time to ‘cause they need to think of where is the next bill coming from. So it’s kind of just like an emphasis on a mix on making sure the information is one, really accessible for everyone to get, whether it’s at the level of Climate Scientists, that I couldn’t even read their reports. Or whether it’s at the level of just being like we have got to a point of where our air is toxic, our water is polluted, and we need to do something about it, so yeah.

Fiona Harvey

Thank you. Thank you for that, and, Farhana, what’s your answer?

Farhana Yamin

Yeah. So, I absolutely support what Daze has said and there’s a little bit of a, you know, what is Extinction Rebellion, is it the shock troops of the Environment Movement? You know, in which case, absolutely, you know, black and ethnic people, you don’t need to come because, you know, our system of justice is going to be disproportionately treating you in a different way, you know. And I feel more protected ‘cause I’m a Lawyer and I’m an advocate and I’m a strong voice and a presence and so, yeah, are we the shock troops, in which case, we don’t necessarily want and ask for, you know, we ask more for able bodied people, people who are robust, you know, getting arrested isn’t a school trip, you know, this is serious risky stuff. And then there’s a sort of thing of, are we going to try and be a sort of mass movement that appeals to every single part of the demographic and equally or – so that there’s the sort of issues there. And I feel overall what Daze has said, you know, my experience is likewise, in the US is, climate change has been seen as a sort of elite middleclass issue. And actually, what we’re – and it’s core, it’s an issue of human rights and of social justice because, as you see, you know, it’s about air pollution. You know, same in Camden, I live in Camden, we’ve got massive roads that are next to schools, a lot of our primary schools are next to schools, diminished, you know, 10% diminished lung capacity, affecting brain capacity, you know.
So, people are talking about climate change as if it was some far off thing that would affect you in the future. Actually, the fundamental causes, you know, of fossil fuel use and extractive industries, as well as land use change patterns affect everyone, and there are issues of social justice in there, which we haven’t really highlighted and are beginning to. You know, so work here at Chatham House is looking at the food, agriculture, diets, behavioural issues, all those other things. And I feel like Extinction Rebellion is trying to appeal to everyone and make it an issue, which does appeal to everyone and hopefully, we’ll get more diversity but, you know, this is an ongoing thing. And the Environment Movement, just to say, is the second whitest sector in the UK after farming, so as I said, you know, we’ve got a long way to go generally, and exploring the reasons why we have less diversity, in some sectors than others is, you know, an ongoing sort of problem. But I’m really grateful that you sort of highlighted it, yeah.

**Fiona Harvey**

Yeah. No, thank you very much for that, that’s very useful, and I think that’s answered your question, alright?

**Simon Holmes**

With one qualification, I’m not so interested in this context in the racial or gender mix, it’s really the social demographic. It’s really about the social demographic, but you have covered that, because I don’t think it’s a racial or gender ethnicity issue, because it’s the middleclass people who are involved there. It’s the same with Parliament, for example, Parliament is now less diverse, in many respects because it’s all middleclass. 50 years ago it was all white, but it was representing the working class. I was interested in the social demographic for the population as a whole, but you have covered that in your responses, but I think that’s the key issue is, if you want to get a broader appeal.

**Farhana Yamin**

And it’s a really good thing ‘cause it’s by and large the middleclasses who need to change their consumption, lifestyle patterns and get themselves arrested, frankly. Sorry, sorry, and this goes to just a very, you know, and I don’t – I have four children, and I feel, look, the least us older people can do is spare them and allow this generation to have the innocence, joy and freedom to the extent that they can, given that they know the world is, you know, a pretty messed up place, I won’t use expletives. So I appeal to all of you, with grey hair and with no dependents or who are sitting now with mortgage free lives, to join whatever activism you feel comfortable with, because they are going to bear the emotional turmoil, they’re going to bear the economic consequences. They’re going and getting degrees for jobs that won’t exist, probably, and I’ll not discourage you, with great debt. So they’ve got a lot of problems that they’re dealing with, and I think that one of the most important demands that – I just want to say that the youth are calling for all over the world, which we can do, at the next election, is to reduce the voting age to 16, is to have a presence by under 21s, at every conference, both to bear witness, as well as to give voice. We need to have much more robust and new ways of thinking to give legal standing for future generations, and I don’t mean ones down in 2030, I mean the generation that’s born now, you know, in the 90s and the 2000s, who will actually live beyond the climate models that we’re talking about.

That really like – when someone said to that to me I thought, oh, yes, gosh, they are going to live beyond these models that I keep talking about when, you know, when we say, “Here’s the 4°C world,” we’re trying to avoid and they might be living in that world. So, I feel like there’s a lot of conversations to be had about what sacrifices and what activism is suitable for who, in terms of demographics. And I feel like, as Daze has pointed out, you know, the least we can do – when I got arrested, you know, it was quite
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Fiona Harvey

Yeah, brilliant, thank you, and that’s a good segue, actually, into this question of generational equity, which you brought up as well, Sam. Perhaps we could address that, this question of the way in which we include young people in decision-making.

Doctor Sam Geall

I thought, well, what it actually made me think of was the other question as well about the case of, you know, Fulani herders and essentially, the global injustice that’s already being inflicted. We don’t actually have to project into the future to look at what a kind of ‘dystopian climate future’ looks like. You know, there are places in the world that are already facing, you know, extreme and worsening droughts. I’ve, you know, I’m not as familiar with situation for mobile pastoralists in Africa, but I am in – on the Qingzang Tibetan Plateau and I’ve done, you know, work looking at, you know, livelihoods for people in semi-arid regions up there, and they’re all witnessing the effects of climate change every day. There’s absolutely no doubt among, you know, pastoralists, herders who have made, you know, made their livelihoods and have lived with obviously extremely low carbon footprints, typically, actually, using off grid solar, very, you know, sustainably managing resources, now finding that, you know, their rains are coming later, their, you know, and where their land is not being, you know, predated on by large developments or mining, extractive, so on, that they’re just losing land to desert, so that reality is already coming out.

But the other thing about that question really, what it pointed out for me is that, you know, we shouldn’t underestimate how fast the kind of right wing authoritarian response. Which, up ‘til now, has been one of largely of denial and of downplaying and scepticism about climate change, will turn very quickly to an authoritarian response that takes into account climate change, but uses it as a way to raise borders, raise walls and to take an extremely draconian approach as, you know, is already being taken towards environmentalists. But much more will be taken towards migrants, as is already of course the case, but will increase rapidly. And this is why I think really, you know, the – we’re in a moment of really unprecedented global uncertainty and that does – that presents a couple of different things. It presents a, you know, very, very – some very dark kind of and potentially very securitised, you know, responses to climate change that I really fear. But it also has made possible, you know, a real imagination about, you know, different ways that we could approach climate change that are fundamentally very equitable. And things like the, you know, the Green New Deal, there’s a launch today of a UK Green New Deal by a think tank called Common Wealth, looking at a, you know, a really progressive equitable vision for how to green the economy, that actually would have been sort of unthinkable to be in a mainstream conversation, until very recently. So we’re in a moment of kind of uncertainty where we could actually maybe open up to some quite progressive visions for climate change that I hope can foreground co-operation and equity and particularly, you know, equity, intergenerational equity, as well as, you know, between Global North and South, and so on, rather than a response that could be, I think, quite authoritarian.
Fiona Harvey

Yeah. No, that’s a really important point actually, yes, that in a sense, in terms of an authoritarian response, we aint seen nothing yet really, it could get a lot worse. Right, more questions, please, and we started a little bit late, so I’m letting this run slightly over time, but not too much, ’cause I know people do need to go. I’m going to take – there’s a lady here and a lady here, if we could have the microphone there and there, please.

Member

Yeah, I wanted to ask about engagement with the political process. I understand about Citizens Assemblies and the need to, you know, build them so that they are really representative, at a local level that’s quite time intensive and costs money, etc. Given that, what should – how should we be engaging with, yeah, politics at local level, as well as nationally?

Fiona Harvey

Lovely, local level politics because the environment is local as well as global. Madam.

Elizabeth Balsam

I’m Elizabeth Balsam, I’m a Member of the Institute. I do worry that some lobby – so, some interests are so powerful that they can Government into doing what they want. And for instance, I live under the flight path to Heathrow and that’s one of my big environmental things, and they’re going to or they’re planning to expand the airport by 56%, which is absolutely ludicrous. And yet, you know, we’re told, yes, I went to a consultation meeting they were holding earlier this week, yes, technology can cope with it all, technology can make planes quieter, which they can’t, technology will cope with the pollution aspects and the zero carbon, you know, the carbon neutral things. And you just have this great power of a lobby and the Government caves into it and this has been going on for years, objecting to Heathrow. And I remember there’s a lobby group or there’s a protest group called Plane Stupid and they have sort of got into airports, climbed onto planes, climbed up on to the roof of Parliament, and me being an oldie thinks, God, thank goodness there’s young kids around who are prepared to do that. And – but another thing sort of John Stewart, who’s a sort of big motive force in HACAN, which is one of – been one of the very constructive and sensible and moderate groups, opposing Heathrow expansion, when he tried to get into the United States a few years ago, he was stopped. He was refused entry into the United States. So, it seems that if you do get into some kind of protest movement, some lobby somewhere else will come and block your freedom to move around and to get into various countries.

Fiona Harvey

Thank you. Thank you very much for that intervention there, that’s very useful to hear. We had a few other questions, I’ll take them quickly, the – a lady there, if you could give her the microphone, and then you, sir, I’ll take you and I think that might be all we have time for, so...

Margareta Dovegal

Thank you so much. Margareta Dovegal, also a Member here. I wanted to ask generally about this criticism I hear very frequently from people that civil disobedience is very effective of course and, you know, I applaud the Extinction Rebellion, in a million different ways, for changing the political discourse.
But I am partially concerned and I hear this criticism often that civil disobedience by hijacking the political process and sort of the usual channels, opens the door to further hijacking and it validates these methods for causes that maybe aren’t as justifiable as fighting to prevent climate devastation. And I was curious how, as activists, do you respond to this criticism, how do you affirm confidence in democratic processes or, you know, for the need for them, even though you admit that these processes fail and have failed us, for the past number of decades?

Fiona Harvey

Okay, thank you very much. Thanks for that, and I said, yes, I said you and was there one here?

Member

Yeah, I’m interested how, within XR, you manage the dynamic of – or get the balance right between causing sufficient disruption to get heard, but keeping the general population onside, ‘cause if you – you will fail, I believe, if you’ve just become a nuisance and everyone hates you. And I think what was fascinating earlier this year is that that balance, I think surprisingly, to me, was very well managed and you did manage to create quite a lot of disruption that kept people onside. So I just wonder how you try to manage that and I know the talks of potential Heathrow disruptions and maybe that would put people off if it disrupts their summer holidays. And then, also, how you stop the process being hijacked by general anarchists and with – ‘cause you could tie lots of different things into the protest. And I wonder whether the protest against the banks, earlier this year, almost was morphing into an anti-capitalist issue, and actually, you’ll only succeed if sort of capitalism comes onboard, rather than trying to overthrow capitalism as well as the solution. So there’s a lot of how you sort of manage that tension internally.

Fiona Harvey

Okay, thank you. If we have to solve the problems of capitalism before we solve climate change, then I’m afraid the seas are going to be boiling around us before we manage that. I’ll give one final question, if we have one. I think there was one. Oh, it was you, sir, sorry, I knew there was.

Member

Thank you. This slightly follows on from the previous gentleman’s comment, but I just wonder, in terms of how you maintain the momentum of something like what Extinction Rebellion did, given that we’ve spoken or there’s been mentioned quite a lot that – there’s been lots of speak about this for decades and the problem has continued and hasn’t – there’s been not much progress. So how do we use the civil disobedience and maintain that momentum, in terms of the impact that it has and actually making change happen?

Fiona Harvey

Okay, lovely. Thank you very much. Thank you for that very concise question there. Right, so we had those questions on local politics, on – the question on the hijacking of the political process, this question of, you know, how much disruption can you get away with, and also, the anti-capitalist question there. And finally, our questioner in the front, so I’m going to come this way, Sam, then Farhana, and then Daze, and you can give your potted responses, please. Thank you.
Doctor Sam Geall

I mean, I guess I'll respond mainly on the issue of politics or green politics, environmental politics often being local and that often being what gives environmental politics its power is that it is a way often to engage with decision-making and at the local level, at the level of people's concerns about, for example, their children's health, their own, their water supply, all of these sorts of things, and it's deeply empowering in that way. And, you know, as Farhana mentioned, and I've also seen in working on, you know, environmental movements in China and elsewhere, typically, for example, that the campaign against the siting of a, you know, site of extraction or, you know, petrochemical production or power plant or whatever, will be a way of empowering and engaging communities in a way they may not have previously. And actually, including them in a way they may not have been previously, in political questions around essentially, you know, what kind of stake do I have in my future? What kind of stake do I have in the scientific and technological choices that my country is – or my, you know, or progress is making? And, you know, how involved can I be in those questions around, you know, what kind of pathway do we want to take? What do we want our future to look like? What do we want for our children's health?

So I think it, you know, so much of environmental politics gets its strength from that type of local pressure and it's always going to be tied back to that, and I think that's true sort of everywhere. And that's why actually, that I guess, critiques of environmental politics that frame it as some kind of elite concern have never really made sense to me, because I guess I've always come into it from someone who, you know, studied it and actually in sort of The Global South context, and it's always been very much about local concerns that, you know, that affect ordinary people. It's not the preserve of kind of elite activists particularly. But I would say it also is a place where people, you know, will go from those local concerns and end up really challenging the dominant model of development and that does mean that there will be really radical critiques that come out of that and I don't think that that is necessarily something to fear or to fear the alienating effect of that and so on actually. I think so much of the power and the resonance of the past few sort of months or so of these campaigns has been – it's been the sort of coincidence of those few movements. So, Extinction Rebellion, school strikes and, as we mentioned, the kind of the Green New Deal idea and that's actually really radical and it does challenge our conceptions about capitalism and it should. You know, I think it is, it's challenging the way that we think about the dominant mode of capitalism, certainly as it's played out to this point, and I think that's part of why it's been so resonant, actually.

Fiona Harvey

Thank you. Thank you for that very concise answer. Thank you.

Farhana Yamin

I'll be more blunt. This version of capitalism has got to – is dead already and it's got to be ditched and a better version has got to come about and Extinction Rebellion is about that, actually. It is about that. It's not saying what it is that we create and what it looks like 'cause, you know, we, as citizens, need to reclaim our democracy and design the system next. On this issue, you know, look, after the financial crisis, which we are still living in the period of austerity defined by that, you know, millions of people, all over the world, lost savings, homes, job security, suffered mental health effects, and people died as a result of all of the social service constraints that went with it. How many people were convicted? How many people were convicted? Zero, thank you. Thank you. So we have a scale of legal impunity, for a certain kind of class and actions, and that's what – and now you're going to convict the 1,000 people that protested
against some of the ill effects and talk about the disruption to Police. That is an absolutely legitimate claim and I worry about it as well, like, will other movements just copy the same thing and do that? But I think we need to understand the scale of legal impunity and who’s not being punished, who’s not being held accountable, who is getting away with ill-gotten gains, frankly, that are undeserved and, frankly, screwing up the planet in the, you know, bad language here, but, you know, that’s what it is. That’s what it’s about.

And I feel that there is a very serious issue that you’ve raised and we think about that all the time, you know, how to design the actions so that they cause disruption, which signals action and which brings people onboard, as opposed to disruption, which just, you know, alienates people and does not bring people onboard. My own view is that, you know, the Heathrow flights, aviation, you know, the use of private jets, you know, as a sort of lifestyle choice, you know, those are totally legitimate things to bring to the fore and bring to the public consciousness, the kind of lifestyle changes we’ll have to think very differently about, including like the very basic idea that you’re all entitled to a holiday. The middleclass people like, you know, like me and – entitled to a holiday for two weeks of the year ‘cause, you know, that makes the rest of the 50 weeks of the year okay, that one special treat that we give to ourselves. You know, we need to think about lives very differently from now on, given the carbon constraints, given the polluting activities, given that we haven’t really invented yet, jets that can, you know – yeah, I mean, there are jets going off to four day weekends to Rio de Janeiro, like city breaks. Go and look them up, you know, that’s kind of like what kind of a system have we set up to justify that?

So, I think just I want to pick up one very quick question, which is the global risks and, you know, climate change has been acknowledged by every security establishment as a threat and national security issue, as a global security issue, as a risk multiplier. The top brass of every military are freaked out by the consequences of that and actually, they understand that at the top level and the Police are bearing the brunt of actual climate impacts on the ground. So, whether it’s through border controls, whether it’s through riots, it’s policing protests, and the Police have never really had a conversation, what does policing, on an unsafe planet in the UK, for example, look like? And they’re having those conversations, they should be having those conversations, what, you know, what do they see and interpret as serious disruption? That’s the legal definition that they have to ask themselves before they impose various orders. You know, what constitutes serious disruption to a community, is it ten minutes worth of traffic disruption? Is it a million pounds worth of profits? You know, those are the kind of things that we, Extinction Rebellion, in terms of designing the actions will do. In terms of momentum going forward, a lot of those decisions, frankly, will not be taken by the centre. There isn’t a big enough, strong enough centre, ‘cause the movement is very decentralised, which has both benefits and risks.

So there’s masses of actions going on now and it is a movement, so I think some of its coherence came from that sort of coming together and holding London as a special place. It is a special place, it’s an iconic place, where the global financial elite, the political elite, the media are all congregated and concentrated, and will be for COP26, isn’t it? My goodness, yeah, next year, so I’m just sort of saying that those things are really important. We can’t always judge and hold accountable every single thing that may happen, but I feel that our political systems will be reinvented very, very fast and are already being, which answers your local question. Sorry, I’m trying to do this very quickly, so on the 1st of July, Camden Council, where I live, had its first Citizens Assembly. Okay, it may not be quite as perfect as, you know, what the Sortition Foundation will resolve or anyone else wants. But the use now of Citizens Assembly is going to transform, I think, our systems and our expectations of what can happen. There’s six select committees that deal with climate change, have announced, and in fact today in – Parliament issued a tender for who’s going to run the Citizens Assemblies on the 2050 target, you know, what the question will be. So I feel like there’s a change happening and we as citizens must take control back. Actually, that’s what Brexit should have
been about, it shouldn’t have been about a border and this sort of ridiculous argument about the EU and us. It should have been about how citizens can really exercise control and how we can create longer lasting deliberative systems that really enable us to make the key decisions and implement those decisions locally and globally and internationally.

Fiona Harvey

Thank you.

Farhana Yamin

I think I did answer those.

Fiona Harvey

No, no, those were really important points and very eloquently made, but I’m just going to take your point on taking control and I’m going to take control because we’re running out of time, so – but thank you for that, ‘cause that was brilliant. Daze.

Daze Aghaji

Yeah.

Fiona Harvey

The final words are for you, which is appropriate because you are going to be the one dealing with all this mess that the rest of us have made, so...

Daze Aghaji

Yeah, I’m going to keep it short and sweet because Farhana covered everything and I agree with Farhana. We’ve got to a point of where we realise things like capitalism and democracy in the way that are running now, just aren’t working anymore. So it’s like I can’t be – sit here and tell you there’s an excellent solution and I’ve created it, ’cause that’s not true, and I feel like the solutions have to come from all of us, so everyone’s voice is included and listened to. There is fear of obviously other people hijacking and using things like civil disobedience and means that can’t really be justified and fear of alienating the public, as well. But I think it’s by almost admitting, at least within Extinction Rebellion Youth, we admit some of the things that we do are problematic and are really annoying to people and it’s like we are sorry. But it’s the urgent need of having to do this, and we wish we weren’t put in a place where we have to do it. So, it’s kind of saying like at this point we really don’t have time. I’m really sorry I’ve ruined your trip to Marbella, but there are people who don’t have clean water to drink right now, and it’s because of us, so yeah, that’s all I have to say.

Fiona Harvey

Brilliant, thank you very much indeed for your contribution, and on that note, I’ll thank all of you for coming because I think you’ll agree with me, that this has been a fascinating discussion, and one that has great ramifications actually, in the streets all around the world and hopefully, also, in the corridors of
power and in the boardrooms. So, thank you all for coming and I think you'll join me in thanking our panellists, too [applause]. Wonderful panellists, thank you.