

## **KALLIED contribution to the COP30 Presidency Roadmap on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels**

This contribution draws on field research from Central America, Southeast Asia, the Arab region and the Andean “lithium triangle” to examine how institutional and governance frameworks related to the just transition actually look like from the ground up, and what stands in their way. The evidence comes from communities resisting energy and mining projects, agroecology and food-sovereignty movements, and indigenous peoples living with the consequences of the “transition minerals” rush. It also draws on the experience of communities in active conflict zones -particularly in Lebanon and the broader Arab region- where war, military occupation, and ecological destruction are not separate from the energy and climate crisis, but central to it.

COP30 was a political turning point: with no consensus possible inside the negotiating room, the Brazilian Presidency took the initiative and launched two landmark roadmap processes on fossil fuels and forests. But political courage only goes so far. Without binding mechanisms and the systematic participation of those most affected, both Roadmaps risk becoming what too many climate commitments have already become: voluntary coalitions, well-worded documents that defer the hard choices.

This contribution therefore focuses on what must change -in governance and justice terms- for the Roadmap on transitioning away from fossil fuels to break that cycle. This statement is submitted by KALLIED -the Knowledge Alliance for Environmental Defenders<sup>1</sup>- a network of more

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<sup>1</sup> This community of practice links 9 projects in 22 Global South countries, bringing together 32 organizations: Observatorio Ciudadano; Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales de Argentina; Posgrado en Ciencias del Desarrollo de la Universidad Mayor San Andrés de Bolivia; Arab Reform Initiative; Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis; The Policy Initiative; The Legal Agenda; Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders; Center for Environmental Concerns; Migrante; Walhi - Kalimantan Tengah; Palangkaraya Ecological and Human Rights Studies; Indigenous Rights Activist Members; Research and Building Community; Dala Institute; Auriga Nusantara; Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC); Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development; Green Advocates International; Alliance for Rural Democracy, Natural Resource Women Platform, Mano River Union Civil Society Natural Resource Rights and Governance Platform, the Association for Progressive Communications; Indigenous Peoples Rights International; The Manila Observatory through the KLIMA Centre; Intervezes; Ogiek Peoples’ Development Program; Asociación Red de Desarrollo Sostenible Honduras; Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales sede Guatemala (FLACSO); Fundación Comunicándonos; Minority Rights Group-Africa; Resource

than 30 organizations from the Global South, spanning the MENA and Arab region, Central and South America, West and East Africa, and Southeast Asia, engaged in research and accompaniment of Indigenous peoples, land defenders, and environmental defenders operating in the frontline territories.

### Barriers: Domestic and international institutional and governance frameworks

Across all the regions where KALLIED works, one pattern recurs: the **institutions that should protect rights, regulate extraction, and guarantee participation are either too weak to do so or have been deliberately shaped to serve other interests**. The international community is not a neutral observer in this pattern; it often contributes to institutional weakness, remains silent in the face of environmental crimes, or is directly complicit in them.

Defenders in Central America point to bureaucratic paralysis, fragmented institutions, and the constant risk of co-optation as the walls they run into when they try to put their evidence and proposals from influencing decisions on energy, water and land use. Companies and local authorities often align, while regulators remain distant or ineffective. In Lebanon, environmental and agro-ecology movements face a sectarian, clientelist political system in which ministries and environmental regulations exist on paper but remain under-resourced and subordinated to entrenched interests, resulting in limited implementation of climate and environmental commitments. This institutional fragility has been compounded by over two years of active war in which Israeli military operations deliberately targeted agricultural land, irrigation infrastructure, fertile land continuity, and food systems. This is a form of ecological violence that directly dismantles the environmental and climate governance that any just transition requires. The international community's failure to prevent or sanction this destruction is not a peripheral issue: it is a key governance failure with direct consequences for climate implementation.

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Rights Africa; Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development; Isiolo Gender Watch; Legal and Human Rights Center. Asuntos del Sur leads Kallied, which is supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

A second barrier is the **systematic shrinking of civic space and the criminalization of environmental and land defenders**, which erodes the social foundations of any just transition. Across Southeast Asia, defenders face harassment, intimidation, judicial persecution through SLAPPs, arbitrary detention, and killings. These are not exceptional events: they follow a documented pattern, often tied to mining, plantation, and mega-infrastructure projects promoted under the banner of "green" development. Similar dynamics surface in Indonesia's nickel and geothermal frontiers, where community researchers describe threats to civic space linked to projects framed as climate mitigation, and where national human rights institutions are only beginning to articulate protection strategies. In Central America, criminalization, internal divisions stimulated by external actors, and the co-optation of community leaders compound each other as structural impediments to sustained collective action.

Third, **sectoral and territorial governance frameworks around "transition minerals" and energy systems often fail to internalize human rights obligations and indigenous peoples' rights**, creating new extractive pressures in the name of decarbonization. A study on lithium in the *altoandino salares* of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile documents how national and provincial legal regimes have enabled the rapid expansion of lithium extraction without adequate attention to impacts on water, ecosystems and indigenous communities' rights to land, consultation, information, participation and access to justice. In some cases, constitutional reforms and mining promotion laws weaken environmental safeguards, prioritize extraction, and confine participation to narrow and state-controlled channels, thus deepening legal insecurity for indigenous peoples and privileging investors' timelines over community consent.

**These problems are not incidental: they reflect how global climate governance is structured in ways that preserve rather than disrupt systems that harm environments.** Ten years after Paris, the UNFCCC process still runs on a logic built around States and markets. That logic decides who gets into the room, who reports, and who receives finance. In practice, it means hundreds of fossil fuel lobbyists hold accreditation while the communities most exposed to climate and transition impacts are left outside, or are expected to engage through institutions they were never part of building. Access to climate finance is often contingent on institutional capacities that marginalized territories do not possess, reinforcing dependency on intermediaries and weakening territorial sovereignty.

In contexts of wars and genocide, even access to aid and vital support becomes politicized, selectively granted or withheld according to geopolitical interests rather than need. Yet paradoxically, the climate governance architecture that produces these exclusions presents itself as technical and neutral. This depoliticization takes its most acute form in conflict-affected contexts: in the Arab region, the very States and actors responsible for fuelling wars are present at the negotiating table as climate partners. Fossil fuel geopolitics and military interests are not separate from the energy transition: they shape it. The Strait of Hormuz concentrates a significant share of global LNG flows, and regional instability directly conditions the energy sovereignty of countries that can least afford price shocks or supply disruptions. A Roadmap that does not account for the intersection of fossil fuel interests, military presence, and geopolitical control over energy corridors will not be able to offer genuine differentiated pathways to the most affected regions.

#### Levers: institutional, social and governance pathways for acceleration

The same experiences that reveal these barriers also point to where change is possible, particularly by reshaping institutional and governance frameworks.

First, **community-anchored advocacy innovations show how governance can be made more responsive**. In Central America, defenders have developed structured advocacy methodologies including actor analysis, power mapping, and collectively designed advocacy plans that strengthen their capacity to engage the full policy cycle (design, approval, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) and to identify precise entry points in regulatory and energy institutions. These practices suggest that formal frameworks can be made more accountable if they systematically integrate community-generated evidence, and ongoing social oversight.

Second, **participatory and territorial governance innovations emerge as key levers**. In Lebanon, progressive agroecology movements are experimenting with food-sovereignty networks, solidarity-based value chains, and participatory governance of land and resources. These initiatives occupy a “transition” horizon, where they test alternative socioecological arrangements that could, if supported and scaled, inform more democratic environmental governance and

policy. In Indonesia, Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) in nickel and geothermal territories repositions community members as peer researchers and co-authors of knowledge, creating structured spaces for dialogue with policymakers. These approaches show how institutions can be brought into real encounter with the lived experience of energy and mining projects.

Third, **strengthening legal and policy architectures that specifically protect environmental human rights defenders and enable their participation is an essential lever.** Regional documentation from Southeast Asia highlights emerging legislative initiatives aimed at recognizing and safeguarding environmental defenders and advocates for instruments that codify States' duties to prevent, investigate, and remedy attacks. The lithium above mentioned case underscores the need for States where extraction occurs, and States where companies are domiciled, to align their laws and corporate practices with international standards on indigenous rights, environmental protection, and business and human rights, including robust duties of due diligence and access to remedy.

At the level of the Roadmap itself, several concrete governance measures emerge from KALLIED's joint reflection:

- Establish a **territorial governance recognition standard** as an annex to the Roadmap, setting criteria by which national transition plans must formally recognize community and indigenous governance structures as actors with voice -and, for projects on their territories, veto- over decisions that affect their water, land and livelihoods.
- Incorporate a **protection of defenders chapter** as a structural pillar in both Roadmaps, with dedicated financing, specific indicators, and progress reporting linked to the Roadmap review cycles -not as a preambular reference, but as an implementation requirement.
- **Adopt binding corporate accountability and human rights due diligence frameworks** applicable to companies operating in energy transition supply chains and forest zones, covering both physical and digital risks to defender communities.
- **Incorporate ecocide as a recognized category within the Roadmap's accountability framework**, establishing protocols for documenting and responding to the deliberate

destruction of ecosystems and agricultural systems as a consequence of armed conflict, and linking these to loss and damage mechanisms under the UNFCCC.

- Create **guaranteed participation quotas** for representatives of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant and traditional communities and small farmers in Roadmap review and monitoring bodies, with a mandate that extends across presidencies to avoid the erosion of gains when hosts change.
- Require that **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) include a territorial governance component**, documenting how community decision-making structures have been incorporated into national transition and land-use planning, and how Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is ensured for relevant projects.
- **Ensure that climate finance access criteria explicitly account for conflict-affected contexts**, where institutional capacity has been deliberately undermined through military operations, occupation, and infrastructure destruction. Conditionality frameworks that treat all countries as equally capable of meeting technical requirements effectively exclude those most in need, and the international community must be held accountable for this structural gap.
- Design **metrics of cultural and social appropriation** for transition plans—such as the proportion of people in affected territories who understand and actively shape transition plans, the availability of these plans in local and indigenous languages, and their integration with community-based educational systems—to complement technical indicators like installed capacity or emissions trajectories.
- **Establish that community-led reports and local systematizations** hold equivalent technical and legal standing to corporate Environmental Impact Assessments before international mechanisms, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and UN treaty bodies.

Finally, coalition-building and the creation of communities of practice among movements, NGOs, research actors and public institutions are crucial governance levers. In Lebanon, mapping of agro-ecology and climate justice initiatives highlights the need to connect fragmented efforts into broader coalitions capable of exerting policy influence and co-creating transformative

imaginaries for environmental governance. In Indonesia and Southeast Asia, alliances between community researchers, NGOs, academics and human rights institutions around just energy transitions, civic space and post-mining social recovery offer promising templates for multi-level governance arrangements that embed justice concerns at the heart of transition debates.

### Experiences, good practices and lessons learned

The findings within the Kallied community of practice provide diverse country and sector experiences that offer transferable lessons for the Roadmap.

From Central America, the *“Incidir para Transformar”* process with environmental defenders in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador illustrates a practice-oriented model for building advocacy strategies rooted in territorial realities, combining legal-technical analysis, community organization, communications work and alliance-building. Specific local plans -for example, around electricity tariffs and regulators in Guatemala, watershed management in Honduras, and land tenure and rural infrastructure in El Salvador- show how communities can engage with sectoral institutions when provided with tools to map power relations, define objectives and monitor progress.

The lithium case in the altoandino salares is a cautionary experience on how transitions can become unjust if institutional frameworks prioritize extraction over rights and ecosystems. It also distills clear lessons on the centrality of indigenous territorial rights, environmental information and meaningful consultation. It argues that for the energy transition to be truly just and equitable, states and companies must redesign legal regimes, environmental assessment processes and investment practices to prevent, mitigate and remedy harms, and to enable indigenous communities to autonomously decide on development pathways in their territories.

In Southeast Asia, environmental defenders facing mega-projects and climate-branded initiatives demonstrate both the risks of militarized and corporate-led governance and the resilience of community organizing. Practices such as establishment of environmental defenders’ congresses, and the use of participatory exhibitions and “fishbowl” dialogues on post-mining social recovery

show how communities generate their own institutions of deliberation, accountability and healing, even when formal frameworks fail them. These experiences suggest that just transitions must include attention to conflict prevention, post-conflict social repair and the psychosocial dimensions of extractive legacies.

### Just, orderly and equitable transition: differentiated pathways and the *green paradox*

The evidence gathered across KALLIED's network points to one overarching conclusion: **a just, orderly, and equitable transition away from fossil fuels must explicitly reflect the diverse realities of countries and communities**, and it must honestly confront the so-called *green paradox*.

The *green paradox* is the risk that the Global North's rush to decarbonize by financing a new cycle of dispossession in the South: lithium for electric vehicles, copper for renewable grids, and large-scale solar or geothermal projects sited on unconsulted territories. In the lithium triangle, projects consume the water of communities that have managed aquifers for generations without proper consultation or benefit-sharing; in Indonesia's Flores Island and in other sites, failures to implement FPIC are not isolated administrative oversights, but elements of a management model that subordinates territorial rights and civic space to corporate speed. A transition that merely substitutes oil with other extractive commodities, while leaving underlying power hierarchies intact, cannot be called just.

Many regions confronting fossil and extractive projects are characterized by fragile or hybrid political orders, conflict legacies and patterns of abandonment. In such contexts, transitions cannot rely solely on technocratic instruments but must address deep-seated inequalities, sectarian or clientelist structures and ongoing violence. The energy transition also intersects with land, water, food and cultural survival in ways that differentiated pathways must be taken seriously. Local agro-ecological practices, indigenous governance systems and community-based economies already embody low-carbon and resilient ways of life. They are not waiting to be transitioned: they are the transition.

Moreover, in other regions where conflict is occurring, the depoliticization of the environmental struggle -treating climate action as neutral while ignoring whose ecosystems are being deliberately destroyed- is in itself harmful for environmental justice. These context-sensitive approaches must name these realities explicitly, and the international community must be held accountable not only for its climate commitments but for its role in the conflicts that make those commitments impossible to deliver.

Justice in transition therefore entails not only preventing new harms but also recognizing and repairing past and ongoing damages, whether from extractive industries or from armed conflict and military occupation that have deliberately destroyed ecosystems, agricultural land, and the environmental movements that defend them. In places where communities have successfully resisted mining but continue to grapple with social fractures and trauma, and in territories where war has dismantled the very institutional and ecological foundations of any future transition, context-sensitive approaches must incorporate mechanisms and resources for long-term social recovery, reconciliation and institutional reform. In high-altitude salt flats and other sacrifice zones, justice requires addressing environmental degradation and erosion of indigenous rights caused by decades of extraction, while re-imagining energy and industrial policies in ways that do not simply shift burdens from one territory to another.

An orderly and equitable transition demands robust, context-sensitive institutional and governance reforms: strengthening environmental and human rights law; ensuring access to information, participation and justice; protecting environmental defenders; recognizing and formalizing territorial governance; and opening formal spaces where community knowledge and grassroots experiments can influence national energy and climate strategies.

These Roadmaps will succeed or fail on whether they can reach the people and territories that formal climate governance has consistently left behind. Embedding territorial governance standards, participation mandates, requirements in NDCs and new metrics of progress into both Roadmaps is not an add-on: it is the condition for them to mean anything at all in the places where the transition will actually happen.