



**Women in Black
London**

Climate Refugees
“We just want a chance to stay!”

During June each year there are two special weeks – **Great Big Green Week**, when groups all around the UK take action on climate and nature – and **Refugee Week**, when the UK celebrates the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking asylum. This year the theme of Refugee Week is Courage. Women in Black London has decided to focus on Climate Refugees in these weeks, bringing attention to the Global Communities who have become displaced because of climate change.

UK communities living by the sea or next to rivers are already becoming familiar with the risks of erosion and flooding as we experience more extreme weather events. How much more hazardous is climate change for those living in countries beset by droughts, floods and fires? UNHCR reports that over the past decade, weather-related events triggered an average of 21.5 million new displacements each year – more than twice as many displacements as those caused by conflict and violence, although often droughts and floods have combined with conflict and violence as poor communities compete for dwindling water sources and shrinking arable land. 32 million people were internally displaced because of climate issues in 2022 alone. Many of the countries most exposed to the impacts of climate change are already host to large numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, such as Sudan and Bangladesh. Refugees often lose the crop varieties they have developed as well as their land.

Every year, millions of people around the world are compelled to leave their homes – not because of war or persecution, but due to floods, droughts, rising seas and deteriorating land. In the recent UK government national security assessment, one of the sections highlights how biodiversity loss is putting at risk the ecosystem services on which human societies depend, including water, food, clean air and critical resources. One example is Central America’s Dry Corridor (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua) where families are facing droughts, floods and crop collapse. They want to stay in their homes but are being forced to move to stay alive.

The statistics reveal a grim and gendered picture: climate change, while an equal opportunity destroyer, is a viciously selective tormentor, disproportionately shattering the lives of women, children and the poor with a layered brutality of displacement, disease and despair. UNHCR reports that 55% of climate refugees are women and girls; Oxfam reports that 60% of climate refugees are children; Global Data Lab reports that 75% of climate refugees are at risk of gender-based violence in host communities.

Action to address Climate Change is urgent and critical to enable people to stay put; but also, the countries most vulnerable to climate change are least responsible. Our government, and others in the Global North, must stand firm in support of strong action on climate, nature and the environment and progress a just transition away from fossil fuels.

For more information see: www.unrefugees.org.uk www.climatejustice.uk www.climate-refugees.org www.climatechange.academy



Women in Black hold vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the National Portrait Gallery, St. Martin’s Place, London WC2. Our vigils are silent, women-only and, if possible, we wear black. We welcome all women who support our call for an end to militarism and war.

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Donations for leaflets most welcome

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