



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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20 January 2024

Dear Secretary of State

Fossil fuel industry: deep concern about COP lobbyists and UK granting fossil fuel licences

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF UK) has been analysing the experience of participating as an NGO in last year's UN COP 28. As you will know, the final document of the COP referred for the first time to "Transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade, so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science."

Yet WILPF is aware that there were 2,456 lobbyists for fossil fuel interests present at COP 28. This was more than the number of delegates from the 10 most vulnerable states participating at the COP (<https://kickbigpollutersout.org/articles/release-record-number-fossil-fuel-lobbyists-attend-cop28>).

We urge you to consider ways in which States Parties may curtail the presence of lobbyists from the fossil fuel industry, without inhibiting the presence of civil society in future COPs.

WILPF further notes that, in spite of the outcomes of COP 28, HM government has continued to issue licences for the extraction of coal, oil and gas that will affect the ability of the UK to meet its agreed emission targets, without helping to resolve UK energy problems. We urge you to rescind these licences.

WILPF's input to the discussions at COP 28 concentrated on highlighting the significance of emissions related to arms production, testing and use. It is a widespread and continuing cause of great concern that States Parties are under no obligation to reveal these statistics which have been estimated to represent 5.5% of the total world emissions.

Now we find that UK and US research has shown (*The Guardian* 10 January) that planet-heating emissions in the first two months of the war in Gaza were greater than the annual carbon footprint of more than 20 of the most climate-vulnerable nations. Over 99% of this CO₂ equivalent emissions is due to Israel's bombardment.

As a 109-year-old women's international peace organisation, WILPF understands that the ethos and process of resorting to arms, militarism, confrontation and conflict as a means of addressing the world's problems has never been an answer.

We look forward to your reply about fossil fuel industry lobbyists at the COP conferences, and your granting of fossil fuel licences.

Yours in peace

Paula Shaw, National Secretary, for WILPF UK Executive Committee

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