

Global Coalition on Migration

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International migrant rights groups join New York climate march, urge durable solutions and human rights commitments in addressing climate crisis

An international delegation of migrant rights advocates will join the massive [People's Climate March](#) on September 21, 2014 and the [People's Climate Justice Summit](#) on September 22-23, 2014 in New York City. The delegation will promote greater collaboration between the migrants' rights and climate justice movements while urging governments to adopt human rights and nature-centred solutions to the global climate crisis.

The representatives from Asia, Africa, Europe, Mexico and the United States are members of the [Global Coalition on Migration](#) (GCM), an international coalition of migrant associations and rights organizations, and advocacy, trade union, faith, and academic institutions.

Across the world, **migrants** and their families are among the many communities on the **frontlines** of the **climate crisis**. Those displaced by climate catastrophes are disproportionately farmers/rural populations, the working class, indigenous peoples, and communities of colour. Displacement of these populations will increasingly become a major driver of forced migration. For those forced to migrate due to climate crises, tough immigration laws, the intensification of immigration enforcement measures at borders, and the criminalization of migrant communities expose them to further **hardship and exploitation**.

For example, in Asia, extreme weather events continue to intensify in severity and frequency. An estimated 30 million people were displaced across Asia in 2010 alone due to the climate crisis; this number will continue to grow with a lasting toll on lives, economies, and society. Social movements in Asia, including migrants, rural communities, workers, and women are calling for legally-binding and massive cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by all countries and the development of concrete, rights-based solutions based on respect for the integrity and interdependence of nature and people.

Mamadou Goïta of the Institut de Recherche et de Promotion des Alternatives en Développement (IRPAD) in Mali and representative of the Pan-African Network in Defense of Migrant Rights (PANiDMR), will testify on Monday at the People’s Climate Justice Summit tribunal, highlighting the intersection between climate change and migration in the African context.

Among the issues that the GCM delegation will address is the emerging use of the term “**climate refugee**” or “**climate migrant**” to describe those displaced by climate-related events. The GCM urges caution in the use of such terms, which risk oversimplifying the root causes of displacement — namely the the **unjust global economic and political system** that has given rise to the global climate crisis in the first place. The GCM further argues that this categorization creates a **false hierarchy** among low-skilled migrants from the Global South, who are subject to the injustices of the global economy that make migration necessary for survival.

According to Colin Rajah, GCM Coordinator, “Only through durable solutions for climate justice and guaranteed protections of migrants’ rights can a just transition to a safe, sustainable, and equitable economy and ecology be realized.”

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International delegates from Mali, the Philippines, Mexico, United States, and the Netherlands are available for media inquiries and interviews.

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