

Key Messages

with a focus on the Injustice of Aviation and Private Jets

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Key Messages on Private Jets

- **The super-rich are super-polluting – this costs the rest of us and burns up our planet.**
 - Their luxuries are our droughts/fires/.... (depending on current news)
 - Private jets are the most climate-wrecking form of transport:
They produce as much as [20 to 30 times more CO2](#) per passenger than economy class airline flights (due to low load factors).
And private flights are at least 200 times more polluting than a train ride (considering also the non-CO2-effects from flights).
 - A private jet can emit [two tonnes of CO2 in just one hour](#), that is double the yearly CO2 emissions of the average person living in Africa
 - No more exceptions for the super-rich: Private jets are not currently [regulated](#) as such and largely excluded from key legislation that is supposed to tackle emissions.
- **While many of us struggle with putting food on the table and paying our bills, private jet sales are sky-high, reaching [records](#) in 2023.**
 - The global fleet of private jets has more than [doubled](#) in the last two decades.
- **Private jets are the pinnacle of climate injustice. But so is aviation as a whole.**
 - The [aviation sector](#) is responsible for more global heating than the entire [African](#) continent!
 - Only [1%](#) of the world's population cause 50% of aviation emissions, while more than 80% have never set foot on an aeroplane.
 - The scandal doesn't stop at private jets: Business and first class seats, [frequent flyer programmes](#), and other "[bullshit flights](#)" are also the problem.
- **Now it's time to stop this madness. The solutions are easy:**
 - We need to ban private jets, end air miles and tax frequent flyers.
 - Let's make polluters pay their climate debt.
 - Let's stand up for climate justice.

Thoughts behind the messaging:

- *Use terms such as “ultra-rich” or “super-rich” rather than “wealthy”, because wealthy has a more positive connotation.*
- *Let’s use private jets as an entry point for the wider injustice of aviation. Let’s also mention excessive flights in general, frequent flyer programmes, business and first class seats, and the need to tax frequent flyers more than those who rarely fly.*
- *Let’s use the notion of “Luxury emissions” - even if some might have positive associations with “luxury”.*
- *Let’s not legitimise non-private flights, saying things like “private jets should be cut first, before everything else”, or “while others just want to fly on their holidays once a year, these rich fly 100 times...”*
- *Let’s draw the connection to the current cost of living crisis and inflation. This is the opportunity to reach out of the bubble, catching not only environmentalists but people angry at the establishment.*
- *Let’s create anger against the ultra-rich, but try not to forget the structural problems this is embedded in: The industry and wealth remaining unregulated by politics.*
- *Let’s not blame our audience for flying - this is counter-productive. (We can blame the ultra-rich, but not our followers: they will need to realise that they might need to cut down their own flights themselves in order to be coherent.)*
- *Let’s avoid saying “time is short, if we don’t act in the next 2 years, climate collapse will come, etc.”. Yes, we have to rush, but the climate crisis is here already and will get worse for sure, and we’ll have to fight it in the most just way. It will always make sense to do something, even in 10 years time. Creating this sense of rush and catastrophe can lead to people calling for top-down technocrat or authoritarian solutions - or resigning.*

General messages on aviation

- **Flying is the fastest way to fry the planet.**
Taking one flight may generate more emissions than many people around the world emit in an entire year.
- **Aviation emissions are sky-rocketing.**
Despite the climate crisis, the industry plans hundreds of new airports and expansions, and predicts [doubling](#) of the number of passengers until 2038.
- **The climate crisis is here and we need to act now.**
Current heat waves, fires, droughts and floods [*or one striking current example*] show that the climate crisis is here already. By the end of this century, the living regions of

[one third](#) of the world population will be threatened by extreme heat, and will likely become uninhabitable. That's in less than 80 years (*us and our children will most likely still experience that*). It's so unbelievable that some people counter little changes they got used to in the last few decades, like cheap flights - but **if everything remains as it is, nothing will remain as it is.**

We need collective action as well as individual change.

- **The aviation industry is 'plane' greedy. It gets a free ride at others' expense.**
It remains basically untaxed and unfairly subsidised. They are flying away with public money. This allows a tiny, wealthy elite to pollute at the expense of all.
- **We need to stop 'bullshit flights': flights that are unnecessary, frivolous and unfair.**
For example private jet flights, short haul flights, space flights, weekend shopping trips... Let's have a democratic debate on legitimate flights versus bullshit flights.
- **Our common destination is a world we can all thrive in.**
Aviation damages the natural world, the livelihoods of airport surrounding communities, and leads to climate upheaval, hurting those who rarely fly. Our transport system should be designed for the benefit of society.
- **Let's guide aviation towards a safe landing.**
Change will happen by design or by disaster - let's choose design. Delaying change is reckless, exposing aviation workers and all of us to growing risks.
To reduce air traffic and make mobility fair and green, we need a diverse approach. The first stage of transition is putting the brakes on expansion. We need to end airport infrastructure projects, and finally put in place fair taxes. This however is not enough, we will need some limits and bans of flights. And of course, fostering real alternatives is key.
- **Let's lay the tracks towards a fair planet. / Let's bring sustainable alternatives back on track. / Let's enjoy the journey! / Travel as if there was a tomorrow**
Few things compare to the pleasure of sitting on a train and watching the landscape shift before your eyes, getting a sense of time and connection, or resting in a night train. Travelling differently might also involve travelling less far and less frequently, rediscovering neighbouring regions and people. It's discovery at your doorstep. Many realise that there must be a better way to get around. The uncomfortable realities of taking flights or commuting, the rising awareness of air traffic's harm to the natural world, the damage it does to the very places it promises to take you to, and the care for loved ones threatened by looming climate breakdown, makes flights increasingly hard to enjoy and justify. Ever more people want to travel responsibly.

Key Messages on Greenwashing Aviation

- **The only green plane is one that stays grounded.**

Technologies like the ones touted by airline executives are far from enough to solve the problem. Most of it is greenwashing.
Grounded alternatives like trains will always be more efficient and sustainable.
Research and development of new technologies is important but it cannot serve as an excuse to delay the emissions reduction that is needed now to prevent climate catastrophe.
- **The industry has a long track of missed climate targets.**

In the last decades, the aviation industry has missed all but [one](#) of the climate and emissions targets it has set itself. They are really good at creating myths and greenwashing.
- **False solutions put more pressure on the poorest.**

Greenwash projects like offsets and bio/agrofuels often have negative consequences for local communities, especially for indigenous peoples.
- **Offsets are a licence to pollute.**

They legitimise business as usual, don't work, may actually increase global emissions, and lead to new injustices. We cannot buy ourselves out of the necessity to reduce flights. / The industry cannot buy itself out of the necessity to reduce flights.
- **Fossil fuel substitutes are just drops in a fossil fuel ocean.**

Rarely any really sustainable alternatives exist yet, and it is impossible to scale them to the growth the industry envisions.
Renewable energy is scarce and should not be wasted for excessive flying.
Flying from waste is trash talk - we simply don't have enough to fly with it.
- **Hydrogen planes are like unicorns.**

Much discussed but mythical, notorious and the subject mostly of industry fairy tales. They are unlikely to happen in time or at any kind of scale able to deliver substantial cuts to pollution.
- **Electric flights are like unicorns.**

They only work for very small engines - it's simply too much weight for the plane.
- **Efficiency gains are eaten up immediately.**

They are far too small to reduce emissions, and overcompensated by the rapid growth of air traffic.

They say - we say

Let's not repeat the dominant industry framing - and instead use our own language!

They say	We say	Why
Air travel	Air traffic	Travel has a positive connotation, while traffic evokes pictures of congestion and noise
Sustainable aviation fuels	Fuel substitutes	Most of these fuels are not really sustainable
Tax free	Tax exempt / Tax privileged	"Free" has a positive connotation
Climate Change, Global Warming	Climate breakdown, climate crisis, global heating	'Change' and 'warming' have positive connotations
Give up flying, renounce flying	Travel differently, slow travel, grounded travel, responsible travel	Giving up sth has a negative connotation
Biofuels	Bio/Agrofuels	Most of them lead to farmland not being used for food

Key Hashtags

#BanPrivateJets

#ReduceAirTraffic

#StayGrounded

#LuxuryEmissions

#ClimateJustice

#StopGreenwashing

#BullshitFlights

#MakeThemPay

#MakePollutersPay

#TrainsNotPlanes

Further Reading

For more background info on messaging and aviation, read our Common Destination Guide (in EN, ES, FR, DE): <https://reframeaviation.stay-grounded.org/>

Q&A and other info on private jets: <https://stay-grounded.org/ban-private-jets/>

More info on greenwashing: <https://stay-grounded.org/greenwashing/>

The Stay Grounded Network is hosted by the Austrian NGO Periskop:

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