

NEWSFLASH

Our future now!

#CANCELCOAL OUR FUTURE NOW

Leading the Charge to End New Coal for our Just Future

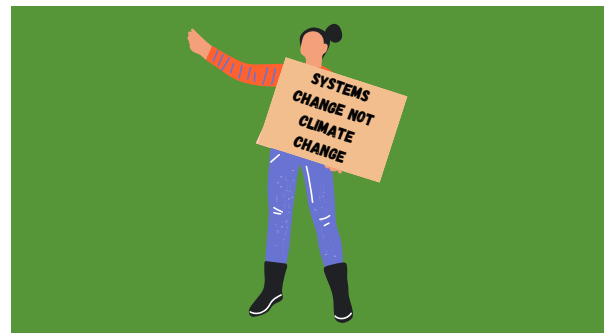


WELCOME

Welcome to the #CancelCoal Newsflash where you can keep in the loop with the latest developments in our fight against new coal power in South Africa. With each issue, we'll bring you updates on our landmark legal case, the latest news updates related to the just energy transition from around the world as well as sharing events and a platform for activists to share their hopes and imaginations for a fairer future. We hope you enjoy the read!

LATEST NEWS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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NEWSFLASH

RELEASE OF GAS MASTER PLAN APPROVED AT CABINET'S LAST OFFICIAL MEETING AHEAD OF MAY POLL

The Gas Master Plan, approved during the Cabinet's last meeting before the May election, aims to diversify South Africa's energy mix away from coal. It supports gas investment, aiming to create an investor-friendly environment and provide an alternative energy source for the electricity sector. However, concerns arise over a potential "gas cliff" by mid-2026, impacting industrial consumers in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. Sasol's plan to redirect gas imports prompts the need for expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports, highlighting infrastructure challenges. Critics warn against commitments leading to high electricity prices. Minister Mantashe acknowledges supply concerns, forming a task team to address issues. The plan's release for public comment is pending, with details on public hearings yet to be confirmed. [MORE HERE](#)

SOUTH AFRICA'S AIR POLLUTION LEVELS ARE THROUGH THE ROOF

South Africa faces severe air pollution issues, ranking among Africa's most polluted countries due to coal-fired plants, particularly those operated by Eskom. The country's reliance on coal for over 80% of electricity contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. The released Gas Master Plan aims to diversify energy sources but comes amid warnings of worsening air quality-related illnesses and deaths. Eskom plans emission reduction measures, but critics highlight the health and environmental impacts. The government faces pressure to transition to cleaner energy sources to align with global climate goals, but challenges persist, including industrial exemptions and infrastructure limitations. Urgent action is needed to mitigate the health and environmental effects of air pollution while ensuring a just transition to renewable energy. [MORE HERE](#)

LEGAL BATTLE BREWS OVER TOTALENERGIES' OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING IN WESTERN CAPE

Environmental groups are challenging TotalEnergies' proposed offshore oil and gas drilling project in South Africa's Western Cape, citing insufficient environmental assessment. The plan, covering a significant area off the southwest coast, faces legal opposition due to concerns about its potential ecological impact and contribution to climate change. Critics argue that government decisions lacked thorough evaluation of risks, particularly regarding the possibility of oil spills and their consequences for coastal communities. This case reflects the ongoing tension between economic interests in fossil fuel extraction and environmental conservation efforts, highlighting the need for sustainable development practices aligned with climate goals. [MORE HERE](#)

PRESIDENCY GIVES AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ENDING LOAD SHEDDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Presidency has issued an 18-month update on the Energy Action Plan (EAP), aimed at ending load shedding in South Africa. Spearheaded by President Cyril Ramaphosa and coordinated by the National Energy Crisis Committee, the EAP focuses on fixing Eskom, boosting private investment in generation, and procuring new capacity from renewables and gas. Vincent Magwenya, the President's spokesperson, emphasized significant progress, including the early return of units at Kusile Power Station and the surge in rooftop solar installations. Key milestones include the launch of the Cross Border Standard Offer Programme and the connection of the first Battery Energy Storage System project. Eskom has suspended load shedding until Sunday, citing sustained generation capacity and planned maintenance. Further updates will be provided as needed. [MORE HERE](#)

POLLUTERS COULD PAY FOR DEADLY KZN FLOODING

A new report from the Centre for Environmental Rights (CER) suggests that South African law could enable claims against major carbon emitters for damages caused by the deadly April 2022 flooding in KwaZulu-Natal. The report explores liability of emitters in climate change-related loss and damage. The floods resulted in over 400 deaths and R17 billion in economic losses, with much damage attributed to ongoing emissions from carbon majors. The CER highlights the potential for legal claims, noting ongoing cases globally. However, success would require extensive research and evidence gathering. The floods significantly impacted Durban's development trajectory, underscoring the urgency of climate adaptation and resilience-building efforts. [MORE HERE](#)

CANCELLATION OF UN CLIMATE WEEKS REMOVES PLATFORM FOR WORST-HIT COMMUNITIES

The cancellation of UN regional climate weeks in 2024 due to a funding shortfall means less representation for developing countries at crucial climate talks. UNFCCC chief Simon Stiell's plea to address the financial gap underscores the severity of the situation. These climate weeks provide a vital platform for the voices of the worst-hit communities to be heard, allowing them to share experiences and solutions. Last year's events saw significant commitments and investments, highlighting the importance of these gatherings. As extreme weather events disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, their inclusion is essential in finding effective solutions to the climate crisis. Global governments must prioritize action and funding to ensure meaningful representation and address the urgent challenges posed by climate change. [MORE HERE](#)

ART OF THE WEEK

By Aksanti Biefait



ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ON: AKSANTI BIENFAIT

Aksanti Bienfait Ba is a visual artist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is a self-taught artist who discovered his passion for drawing and painting at a young age. He draws inspiration from the artists around him and the life cycle, firmly believing that art has the power to inspire tangible change.

In 2016 he fled the war from his home country and settled in the Nakivale refugee camp in Uganda. It is in the refugee camp that he began his professional journey as an artist and developed his own artistic voice in the community. His work focuses on human ecology, emphasizing the crucial and symbiotic relationship between ecosystems and human beings.

Q&A

How do you believe art can contribute to positive social change?

Art has the power to evoke emotions, spark conversations and challenge perspectives. Art can inspire empathy, promote understanding, and drive action towards positive social change. Artists have the ability to use their talents to amplify voices, showcase diverse, and foster a sense of community and unity by engaging with art that addresses social issues as well as individual are encouraged to reflect on their own actions leading to a greater awareness and potential for social transformation

Are there any specific social or environmental issues that you are particularly passionate about addressing through your art?

I do not have personal passions or biases. However, I am designed to provide information and support on a wide range of social and environmental issues.

What message are you trying to share with the piece of art you've shared with us?

The message I am trying to share through the art piece is open to interpretation and can vary depending on the viewer's perspective as well as encouraging positive changes and people to reflect on their actions.

Where can people follow you and/or see more of your work online?

Instagram: @aksanti.bienfait.art

Facebook: Aksanti Bienfait Ba

Twitter: @Aksantiart

Portfolio: [Aksanti Bienfait](#)

