

A PUBLIC LETTER TO THE HON. MIA MOTTLEY, PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS

Dear Prime Minister Mottley,

We the undersigned are writing to welcome you to Guyana. We understand that you will speak at the International Energy Conference and Exhibition 2022 (15th to 18th February).

We congratulate you on your recent Champion of the Earth award. We also congratulate you on ushering Barbados into Republic status, officially cutting ties with your former colonial power and continuing the process of decolonisation in the Caribbean.

As for us, in the words spoken by our friend from the Pacific, Brianna Fruean, as she stood at the podium at COP26, "*We are not drowning, we are fighting*". Guyana is a carbon sink thanks to our thousands of square miles of rainforest and mangroves.

However, ExxonMobil has announced discoveries of over 10 billion barrels of oil. Burning that oil would release over 4.2 billion tons of greenhouse gas and turn Guyana from a carbon sink to a carbon bomb. At the recent COP26 Climate Summit, the nations gathered agreed on actions to cut greenhouse gas emissions in order to keep global warming below 1.5⁰C as set out in the Paris Agreement. Guyana and Barbados are signatories to the Paris Agreement which is an international treaty. However, ExxonMobil's oil and gas operations undermine the global effort to restrict global warming to 1.5⁰C.

ExxonMobil's operations threaten Guyana and our sisters and brothers in the Caribbean. Already fish are disappearing, and people are losing their livelihoods. But it could be worse.

Deep water drilling is very dangerous. You will remember the Deepwater Horizon disaster when an oil well blew out and polluted the Gulf of Mexico with more 4 million barrels of oil.¹ Exxon's ultra-deep drilling, 2 miles below seabed, means that the oil is under immense pressure. There is a serious risk of a well blowout. We are really concerned because ExxonMobil has admitted that they are using faulty equipment. As a result, they have flared billions of cubic feet of gas. Courageous women have just gone to court to stop the flaring.²

We include below a map from Exxon's Environmental Impact Assessment for the Yellowtail Development Project, showing that a well blowout from ExxonMobil's operations could result in oil pollution across the Caribbean Sea and countries, as far as Jamaica. ExxonMobil estimates that there would be 2,661,840 barrels of oil in the Caribbean Sea. By any measure that would be an environmental disaster.

A well blow out would also be an economic disaster, destroying any possibility of the Caribbean being able to develop a blue economy. We note that the Blue Economy Roadmap in Barbados, spearheaded by the Hon. Kirk Humphrey, Minister of Maritime Affairs, highlights the importance of sustainability, marine energy, tourism and fisheries, and addressing the ever-growing threat of climate change to our oceans.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/deepwater-horizon-bp-gulf-mexico-oil-spill>

² <https://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2022/01/23/3-courageous-guyanese-women-file-legal-challenge-against-epa-to-stop-exxonmobils-flaring/>

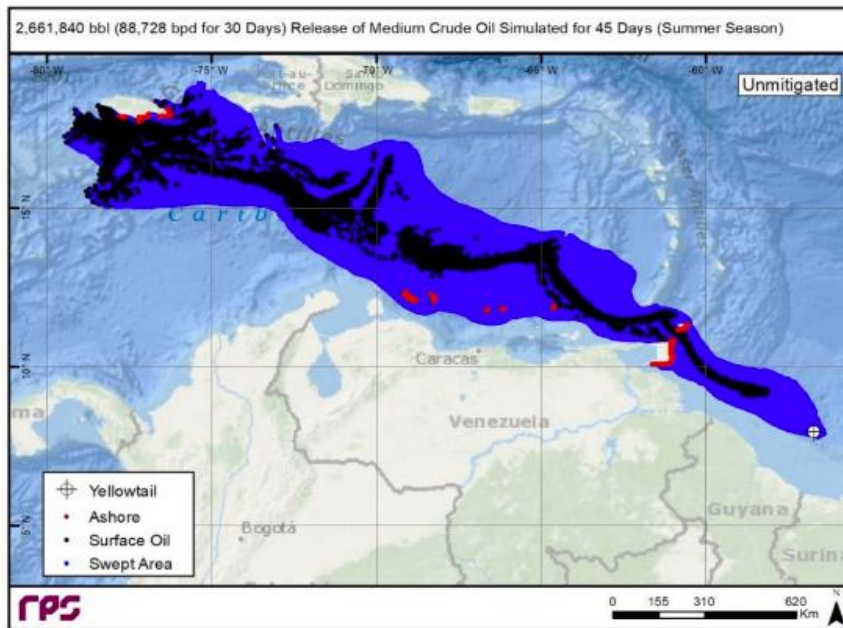


Figure 9.1-11a: Deterministic Map for Scenario 14—Predicted Transport after 45 Days from an Unmitigated 88,728 BPD (14,196 m³) Subsea Release (Most Credible WCD) of Crude Oil Lasting 30 Days (Jun–Nov)

Oil and gas operations are causing climate change, ocean acidification and rising sea levels. The science is unchallengeable. The UN Secretary General Guterres has warned that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 1 report on the physical science basis (the sixth assessment report) was a ‘code red’ for humanity.³

We are inspired by your speeches at the UN and COP26 regarding the impact of the environmental/climate change disaster facing not only Barbados and the Caribbean, but the entire Global South. Economic activity which destroys the global climate system is not ‘sustainable development’.

Last September at the UN you asked the critical question, **“How much more global temperature rise must there be before we end the burning of fossil fuels?”**⁴ We urge you to ask that question again at Guyana’s International Energy Conference and Exhibition.

Thank you again for your tremendous efforts to push a progressive and visionary path for the Caribbean.

With our best wishes,

Trishona Ainsworth
 Faith Albert
 Mary Bernard Albertsen
 Jeneal Batson
 Marquise Benjamin
 Sophia Bhagwandeem

³<https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20847.doc.htm>
http://www.news.cn/english/2021-10/27/c_1310271147.htm

⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wz_IDnay3H8 at 4.13

Trisha Bhagwandin
Karishma Budhram
Janette Bulkan
Ronald Burch-Smith
Cassie Carryl
Paige Carter
Abbyssinian Carto
Safisha Castello
Hilton Chester
Shantie Chunilall
Ricardo Dabie
Luke Daniels
Duane de Freitas
Jordon Denny
Rahul Deonarine
Jerry Diaz
Mickele Dodson
Leila Doobay
Phileisha Douglas
Sandra Edwards
Donielle Garraway
Hailu Gibson
Peter Gibson
Kelliann Glasgow
Khemraj Goberdhan
Gem Gomes
Nikkita Greene
Gregory Halley
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