

Climate activists target private jets of ultra-rich in Geneva

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Geneva, May 25 (RHC)-- More than 100 climate activists and scientists targeted the biggest private jet sales fair in Europe earlier this week, chaining themselves to the gangways of luxury planes and placing tobacco-style health warning labels on the aircraft to decry their contributions to planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions.

"Geneva is home to one of the airports with the most private jet traffic in Europe," said Joël Perret, a spokesperson for Extinction Rebellion Genève. "This is where change must begin: we need to drastically reduce aviation to halt climate catastrophe and the destruction of life. The first step is to ban private jets now!"

The campaigners from Greenpeace, Stay Grounded, Extinction Rebellion, Scientist Rebellion, and other climate groups used the European Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition (EBACE) in Geneva as an opportunity to call public attention to the "luxury emissions" of the world's super-rich, who contribute disproportionately to the climate crisis.

According to the United Kingdom's policy manager for transport and the environment, the average private jet unleashes two tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere per hour—a fifth of the average U.K. citizen's carbon footprint for an entire year.

Greenpeace notes that a private jet flight produces roughly 10 times more CO₂ emissions than an ordinary commercial flight on a per-passenger basis. "We're in a climate emergency," said Cordula Markert, a spokesperson for Scientist Rebellion Germany. "Therefore, it is no longer tolerable that the super-rich keep parading themselves in events such as EBACE and keep buying and flying in their private jets for their own benefit, while we know that this fuels the flames of climate breakdown, threatening all of us."

"They have to be stopped," Markert added, "and that's why scientists and activists from all over Europe joined together in Geneva, taking action against this madness."

The activists demanded a global ban on private jets -- which they described as "luxury mega-polluters" -- as sales of the aircraft continue to grow at a pace that climate campaigners say is unsustainable if the world is to adequately cut transportation emissions, a significant driver of global heating.

A joint report released earlier this month by the Institute for Policy Studies and Patriotic Millionaires found that the size of the global fleet of private jets has increased 133% in the last two decades, from 9,895 in 2000 to 23,133 in mid-2022."

"For over 20 years, Europe's super-rich have popped champagne behind closed doors at EBACE while shopping for the latest toxic private jets," Klara Maria Schenk, transport campaigner for Greenpeace's Mobility for All campaign, said Tuesday. "Sales of private jets are skyrocketing, and with them the one percent's hugely unfair contribution to the climate crisis—while the most vulnerable people deal with the damage. "It is high time for politicians to put a stop to this unjust and excessive pollution and ban private jets," said Schenk.

Mira Kapfinger, campaigner from Stay Grounded, added that while "many can't afford food or rent anymore, the super-rich wreck our planet, unless we put an end to it."



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