



Attendees shout slogans in support of the Palestinian people during the People's Plenary at COP28 at Expo City in Dubai. — AFP

## Gaza crisis: UAE residents join calls to boycott brands

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Historically, boycotts have been a powerful tool to pressurise authorities into bringing about changes. Whether it was the Quit India movement organised by Mahatma Gandhi to gain independence for India or the American boycott of British products during the American Revolution, boycotts

have been successful in mobilising action. As the Gaza crisis enters its second month with no end in sight, there has been a global call for boycott of brands that either openly support Israel or have financial ties with the country. Here, in the UAE, hundreds of residents have joined the movement to put financial pressure on global conglomerates. Websites have sprung up with lists of brands to boycott while social media groups have been

rife with residents discussing what alternatives to buy in terms of food, groceries and clothes. For many UAE residents their decision to participate in the boycott came from a position of frustration and helplessness.

"I'm choosing to boycott companies who have shown blatant support of the oppression and killing of innocent Palestinians in Gaza," said Rhannon Downie-Hurst. "My life has been absolutely fine without these brands and businesses. In fact, I believe that it sometimes forces people to be far more conscious and aware of what businesses are receiving their hard-earned money from and often moves people towards local, homegrown, and smaller businesses."

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# COP28 makes history

Climate deal mentions fossil fuels for the first time; Kerry says agreement text stronger as talks go into overtime

The COP28 climate talks went into overtime on Tuesday as countries engaged in shuttle diplomacy to bridge deep international divisions over how to deal with fossil fuels in the summit's final text.

Where the conference lands on the issue will send a powerful message to global investors and markets about the ambition of governments around the world to end the use of oil, or preserve a future place for it. Many nations had criticised a deal draft released on Monday for failing to call for a "phase-out" of fossil fuels, which scientists say are by far the biggest source of the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming.

More than 100 countries ranging from the United States and the EU to tiny island nations had pushed for the language, but came

up against strong resistance from members of the Opec oil producer group and its allies.

Germany's Climate Envoy Jennifer Morgan said the talks had now entered a "critical, critical phase". "There is a lot of shuttle diplomacy going on," she said on X, formerly known as Twitter, referring to fast-paced meetings between countries to hunt for compromise.

US Special Climate Envoy John Kerry popped out of one meeting with representatives from several other delegations late on Tuesday and said he believed the fossil fuel language in the COP28 deal text was getting stronger.

"I think there's progress and moving in the right direction. And you know, we're going to keep working through the night," he told reporters.



Climate activists protest against fossil fuels during the final stages of the COP28 in Dubai on Tuesday. — REUTERS

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## What is Santa Claus doing at COP28?



M. SAJJAD / KHALEEJ TIMES  
Philip McMaster, also known as Sustaina Claus, at Expo City in Dubai on Tuesday. Philip has participated in eight COPs since 2015's COP21 in Paris.

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Philip McMaster, known as "Sustaina Claus", is a civil rights activist, former University MBA professor and an Eco-Entrepreneurship developer. He "aims to travel the world making children's future more sustainable through Sustaina Claus."

Philip has participated in eight COPs since 2015's COP21 in Paris, and he returned to the UAE after 25 years to see it as a "hub for sustainability information, innovation and training." McMaster, dressed as Santa Claus, carrying with him children's toys that read "We act in peace", is at COP28 advocating for civil and human rights, "Reminding parents and leaders to take individual social responsibility in their lives by focusing on building a sustainable future for our children and becoming stewards of the earth".

Philip, known for his famous

three-finger sign, represents the balance between society, environment, and economy. To achieve these three sustainability goals, Claus believes that it is essential for parents to establish a healthy relationship between AI and their children. He suggests parents take time away from screens to play with their children and start a 'Change Wednesday' ritual at home. This ritual will help parents, guardians, and children learn to smile, embrace change, and unplug to form habits that take them away from screens.

Philip believes in the importance of spreading happiness and sustainability; thus, he chose to dress like Santa, "People are attracted to the red hat, and they discover their love for the sustainable Claus message how it is spreading happiness and awareness throughout communities to make the planet healthier and happier."

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## You can board up to 3 buses in Abu Dhabi and pay only Dh5

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Abu Dhabi has standardised the fare structures for all its public buses, the transport authority announced on Tuesday. The basic bus fare for both the city and suburban areas will now be Dh2, plus 5 fils per kilometre — with the cost capped at Dh5 per journey, according to the Integrated Transport Centre (ITC).

This means that when a passenger rides more than one bus to reach his final destination — whether from the city to the suburbs or back — he no longer has to pay the Dh2 base fare multiple times, the centre explained.

Paid via the 'Hafalat' smart card at the end of the trip, the cost is calculated from the passenger's boarding destination to his/her last dropoff, the ITC said.



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- 1** The passenger must change the bus within a reasonable period of time
- 2** The number of changes must not exceed two times, which means the trip must be completed using a maximum of three buses.
- 3** There should be no change to the opposite direction of the itinerary. Passengers must swipe their cards when boarding the bus and before hopping off to calculate the cost of the trip. Those who fail to swipe their cards at the end of the trip shall be charged the maximum fee.

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