

Dear Patricia Espinosa and the following interim for the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC,
As two gay men, publically recognized as youth figures within the climate and environmental movement, we are sending this letter to you with great weight regarding COP27's Egyptian presidency and location that was agreed despite LGBTQ+ torture, woman slaughter and civil rights suppression.

You have let down LGBTQ+ people, women, activists and allies. In a conference set with the purpose of creating space for future thinking to stop the climate emergency, critical marginalized voices that are necessary for these discussions have been silenced and suppressed. Your decision to host COP27 in Egypt places our life in danger in the process of advocating for the life of our planet. This betrays not only your commitments to making the COP27 lead up "as transparent and accessible as possible" but also the UNFCCC's commitments to justice.

Our hope now is that the COP27 President-Designate, Dr. Sameh Shoukry will, and yourself, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, collaboratively make the decision to move the location of COP27 to another African country that would comfortably accommodate LGBTQ+ peoples, women and civil protest, also ensuring the inclusion of African voices in this year's summit priorities. COP locations have been moved previously under much stricter time constraints so this request is more than valid and realistic.

In recent years and months, the world has watched Egypt's police, courts and politicians turn their backs on equality through the criminalisation and imprisonment of the LGBTQ+ community under vague and discriminatory "debauchery" and "prostitution" laws. Human Rights Watch, assisted by a Cairo-based LGBT rights organization, interviewed 15 people including LGBT people prosecuted between 2017 and 2020, including a 17 year old girl, two LGBT rights activists and two lawyers who represented the victims in these cases. All of those interviewed stated that: Police verbally harassed, physically abused (ranging from slapping to being water-hosed), and physically restrained them (including being tied up for days). All victims were held in pre-trial detention for prolonged periods, in one case up to four months, often without access to legal counsel. Nine of the fifteen said police officers incited other detainees to abuse them. Eight were victims of sexual violence, and four said they were denied the basic right to medical care.

For more than three years, we personally, alongside young people all over the world have been protesting alongside intersectional movements, including LGBTQ+ rights, to demand concrete climate action, from within policy spaces like the White House and the two previous COPs to outside on the streets with School Strikes for Climate and FridaysForFuture. We will not sit idly by as our work, and others, in these spaces are forcibly stopped due to our sexuality. This is inherent discrimination on account of the United Nations. The same institution that created the

Sustainable Development Goals. The same institution that stated “other communities or groups of people identified as being more vulnerable owing to marginalization included urban poor, rural and remote communities and LGBTI people.” And the same institution that narrates that they themselves are the pioneers of climate justice.

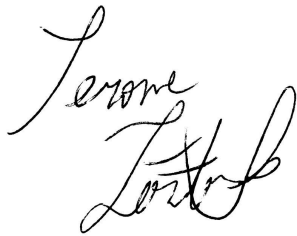
This choice on the future of COP27’s location will not just impact us, but the entire world as the capability to have rich perspectives on justice and reasonable demonstration outside the walls of the UNFCCC will have failed before COP has even begun. People who were born without these certain privileges and rights to be fully safe and accepted in places and spaces will be isolated from these imperative dialogues needed for the welfare of our generation.

As two young men in a same-sex relationship, who have been fronting the climate movement in the United States and the United Kingdom, we urge you to stop the story young people read and watch everyday of the double standards and exclusivity within areas of policy and political power. Be allies. It is time to be truly inclusive in creating the plans of tomorrow by ending the era of privileged cis-gender heterosexual white men being the puppet masters behind global decision making.

Sincerely from,



Elijah McKenzie-Jackson, *Climate Justice Activist & Civic Artist*



Jerome Foster II, *White House Climate Advisor & Climate Justice Activist*

Supported by,

Ahmed Alaa, *Egyptian LGBTQ+ Activist*

Nadya Tolokonnikova, *Russian Women's Right Activist*

Patience Nabukalu, *Ugandan Climate & Conservation Advocate*

Eric Njuguna, *Kenyan Climate Justice Organiser*