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Understanding the Gen Z Uprising



Image: *November protests in Paris (2026). Dimitar Dilkoff/Agence France-Presse/Getty.*

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Across Europe, Gen Z* is taking to the streets over a range of issues, from crumbling schools (France) and unaffordable housing (Spain/Portugal) to military conscription (Germany) and political corruption (Serbia).

Gen Z protests have also raged across the Global South in recent years, including Bangladesh (2024), Nepal (2025), and India (2026).

Why are the youth rising up? →

***Note:** Gen Z includes people born between 1997 and 2012 (14 to 29 years old in 2026).

***Source:** Grulovic et al., Reuters (2026). **Images:** (Spain) Banner reads "Looking for an apartment, selling a kidney", AP Photo /Andrea Comas; (Germany) Banner reads "No to compulsory military service", Christian Mang/Reuters; (Nepal) Shutterstock; (India) Shashi Shekhar Kashyap.*

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1. Youth are struggling to lead a dignified life

Young people face significant difficulties in securing basic necessities. For example, in Poland and Portugal, over 50% of young people are forced to live at home due to unaffordable housing costs.

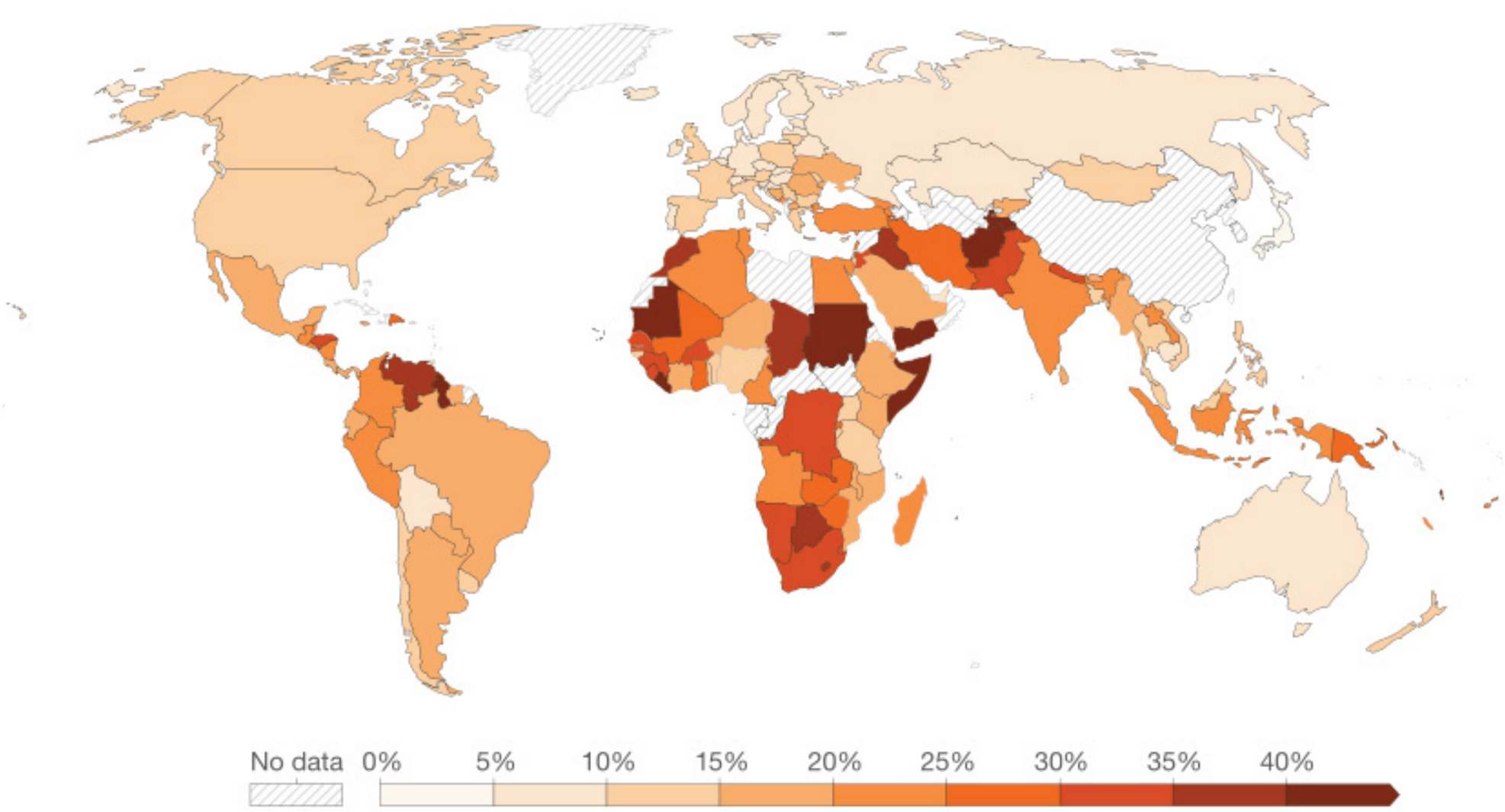
Youth also make up a major component of the 1.1 billion people living in informal settlements, most of whom are concentrated in the Global South.

Sources: *Hyland et al., Eurofound (2025); UN-Habitat, The Global Housing Crisis (2026).*
Image: *Protests over the housing crisis in Portugal, poster reads "I want to leave my parent's house before I'm 50", Lusa.*

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Share of young people not in education, employment or training, 2024

Percentage of people aged 15–24 who are not in education (formal education or short courses), employment (worked in paid work or self-employment), or training (non-academic skill-building activities). Figures refer to national estimates[1] and may not be fully comparable across countries.



2. Youth are economically disadvantaged

Today's youth are often consigned to the "reserve army" of labour, the section of the working class that is able to work but unable to find employment.

Today, more than 257 million young people – one in every five – are not in employment, education, or training. This is nine million more than in 2023.

Source: *ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth (2026).* ***Image:*** *Our World in Data.*

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3. Youth's future is being robbed

The planet is moving closer to a "point of no return," beyond which runaway global heating cannot be stopped.

Meanwhile, the NATO-led proxy war in Ukraine and the US-Zionist war on Iran are dragging humanity towards a global nuclear confrontation.

Sources: *Carrington, The Guardian (2026); UK Government, Global biodiversity loss (2026).* ***Images:*** *(Top) With an average age of 22, Kiribati's future generations will suffer most as the island will become fully submerged due to rising sea levels, Getty. (Bottom) Global Cimate Strike protesters in London, Ben Stansall/Getty.*

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Throughout history, young people have resisted their own oppression and powered struggles for a new world →

__Image:__ Members and supporters of the British Black Panthers at a demonstration in London. Neil Klenock.

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Socialist revolutions: The Bolsheviks – the leading force of the Russian Revolution – had a significant youth base. In 1907, 75% of Bolshevik members were under 30 years old.



National liberation struggles: In 1925, a young Hồ Chí Minh established the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League, a Marxist-Leninist organisation dedicated to educating and training young revolutionaries.



Popular uprisings: The uprisings of 1968 were an ideological and cultural revolt that was sparked by youth before spreading throughout society.

Source: *Molyneux, Marxism and the Party (2017).* ***Images:*** *Bolshevik soldiers demonstrate in the streets of Petrograd, ENA/Popperfoto; Painting depicting Hồ Chí Minh giving a lecture at a training course for Vietnamese revolutionary cadres, Vietnam.vn; May 1968 protests in Paris, Bruno Barbey.*



Extending the struggle

Today's Gen Z uprisings are rooted in this historical legacy. But to extend them towards a revolutionary horizon, we must:

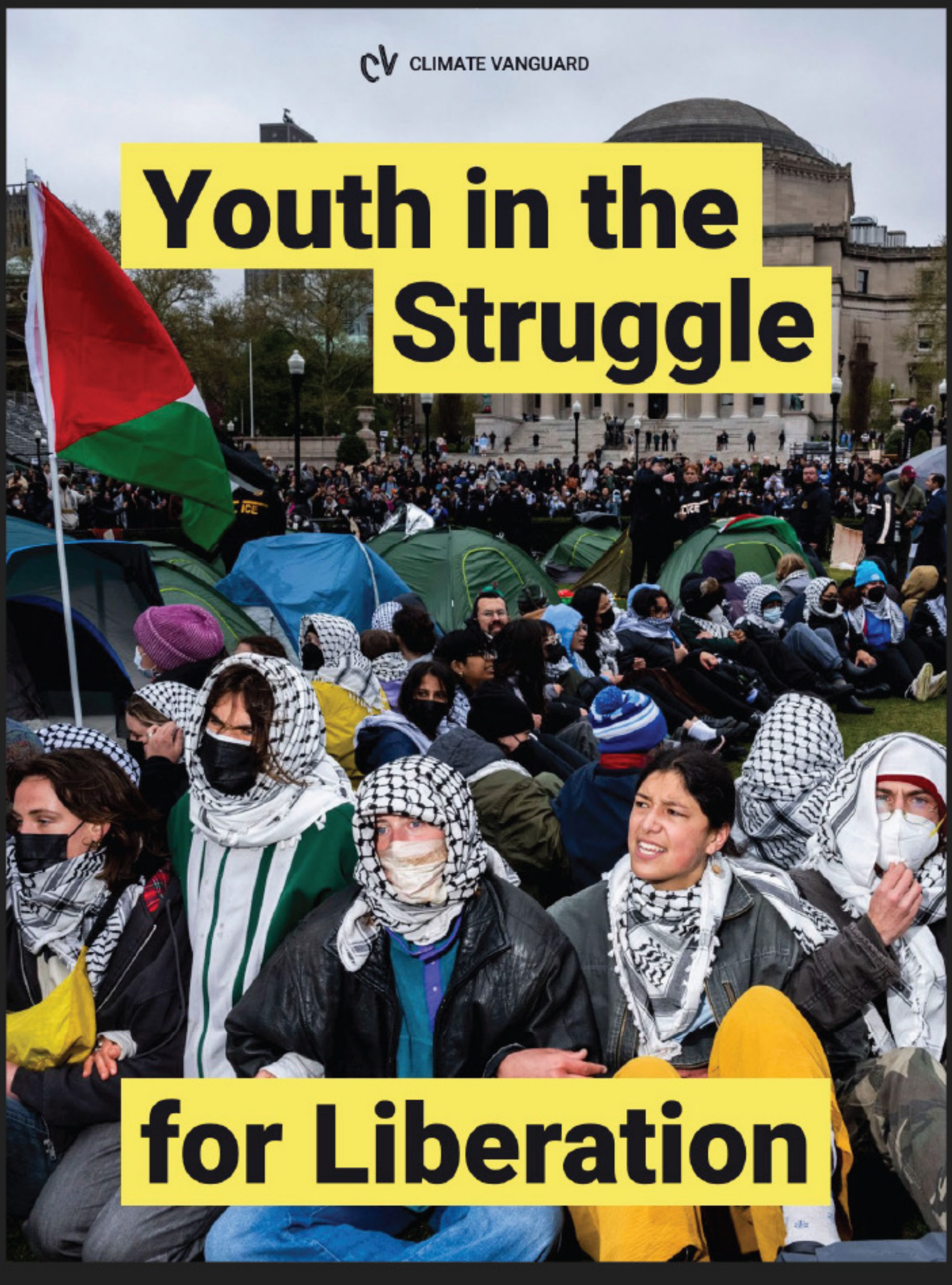
- **Inspire:** Link up young people's grievances with an eco-socialist programme based on working class economic security and internationalism.

- **Educate:** Transform progressive political instincts into radical clarity on the systemic causes of oppression – capitalism and imperialism – and the world we need – eco-socialism.

- **Organise:** Build the infrastructure that can outlast spontaneous uprisings and anchor the long-term revolutionary struggle.

Image: *Supporters of the Student List opposition bloc in Belgrade, Serbia, celebrating its victory in the national elections. Marko Djurica/Reuters.*

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