

Make Amazon Pay

Via [ZNet](#)

“Amazon takes too much and gives back too little. It is time to Make Amazon Pay.”

Those are the [words](#) of a global coalition of warehouse workers, trade unionists, climate justice activists, and citizens who have organized worldwide protests this Black Friday to challenge the exploitative and anti-democratic practices of one of humanity’s most powerful corporate empires, headed by the richest person in history.

According to new [reporting](#) from *Business Insider*, the Make Amazon Pay coalition has planned Black Friday actions in 15 countries: Brazil, Mexico, the U.S., the U.K., Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Poland, India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Australia.

Workers at several logistics centers across Germany are engaged in a three-day strike meant to disrupt Amazon’s profitable holiday sales during the retail industry’s busiest period, *Euronews* [reported](#) Friday.

Meanwhile, *Business Insider* reported that Bangladeshi workers demonstrated outside an Amazon facility in Dhaka.

In addition to labor protests, left-wing economist Yanis Varoufakis [called](#) on consumers to participate in a Black Friday boycott of Amazon, which he described as “a gigantic, behavior modification machine,” pointing to the relationship between its data services, algorithms, and policymaking.

“By boycotting Amazon, you will be adding your strength to an international coalition of workers and activists,” he said in a video shared online Thursday. “Amazon is not a mere company. It is not merely a monopolistic mega firm. It is far more, and

far worse than that. It is the pillar of a new techno-feudalism.”

The Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, “has exposed how Amazon places profits ahead of workers, society, and our planet,” the Make Amazon Pay coalition noted on its [website](#), where strike fund donations are accepted.

The wealth of billionaire CEO Jeff Bezos—whose record-breaking personal fortune surpassed \$200 billion in August 2020—and other super-rich corporate executives has [ballooned](#) during the coronavirus crisis, yet Amazon employees’ short-lived [hazard pay](#) was taken away at the end of May, even though these essential workers have continued toiling at great risk to their own health.

Ahead of the Black Friday rush, human rights advocates at Amnesty International on Thursday [released](#) a [report](#) (pdf) detailing Amazon’s “adversarial relationship with trade unions” and lackluster approach to health and safety.

The Make Amazon Pay campaign also pointed out that Amazon’s carbon footprint “is larger than two thirds of all countries in the world,” but rather than address how its “growing delivery and cloud computing businesses are accelerating climate breakdown,” the corporation has intimidated workers who speak out.

“Like all major corporations, Amazon’s success would be impossible without the public institutions that citizens built together over generations,” the statement continued. “But instead of giving back to the societies that helped it grow, the corporation starves them of tax revenue through its world-beating efforts at tax dodging.”

In 2019, the trillion-dollar technology titan “paid just 1.2% tax in the U.S., the country it is headquartered in, up from 0% the two previous years,” the campaign said.

A video shared on social media by Progressive International, a global justice organization and member of the coalition, explained how Amazon has suppressed union organizing, threatened climate campaigners, and evaded taxes:

As *Business Insider* [reported](#) Friday, Amazon [announced](#) on Thanksgiving that “it was granting a total of \$500 million in holiday bonuses to its frontline workers, translating to \$300 for full-time employees and \$150 for part-time employees.”

“Surely Amazon can do way better than this,” [said](#) an unnamed worker based in the U.K.

The fact is that “Jeff Bezos could pay a \$105,000 bonus to every Amazon worker and still be as rich as he was at the start of the pandemic,” according to the coalition—a cross-border alliance of more than four dozen social and environmental justice groups including UNI Global Union, Amazon Workers International, Progressive International, Oxfam, Sunrise, Tax Justice Network, and Public Citizen.

While “it is great that workers are getting more this holiday season, it is not enough,” UNI Global Union general secretary Christy Hoffman told *Business Insider*. “To show it values its workforce, Amazon should collectively bargain wages and conditions with workers throughout its operations, rather than make one time unilateral gestures of appreciation.”

Ahead of Friday’s global day of action against the e-commerce giant, the campaign issued a list of common demands, all of which seek to “Make Amazon Pay.” That means paying “its workers fairly, for its impact on the environment, and its [taxes](#).”

The campaign is fighting for better pay for Amazon’s workers—“in line with the increasing wealth of the corporation, including hazard pay and premium pay for peak times”—as well as improved working conditions and benefits, such as paid sick leave “so that no worker has to choose

between their health or their job.”

The coalition also seeks to protect Amazon workers’ rights to organize as well as unions’ rights to promote the interests of employees—without [fear of surveillance and retaliation](#), throughout the company’s global supply chains.

In addition, the campaign is pushing for Amazon to commit to zero emissions by 2030 and to eliminate “tax abuse through profit shifting, loopholes, and the use of tax havens,” among other demands to safeguard consumers’ data.

“Amazon is not alone in these bad practices,” the coalition acknowledged in its campaign [statement](#), “but it sits at the heart of a failed system that drives the inequality, climate breakdown, and democratic decay that scar our age.”