

GREENPEACE
South Asia

2.26

WITNESS

VOL. 07



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK



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Every campaign in this issue begins with the same conviction: the people closest to a place understand it best.

For generations, communities have cared for the forests, coastlines, rivers, and ecosystems they call home. They understand their rhythms, notice their changes, and carry knowledge that cannot be captured through policy documents alone. Yet decisions about conservation, development, and climate continue to be made without meaningfully sharing power with the very people whose lives are most affected.

This issue reflects a different way of working. From community members in Mannar bringing their own stories to the stage, to conversations on Free, Prior and Informed Consent, to young people strengthening environmental leadership across South Asia, these pages remind us that meaningful environmental action begins with listening. Lived experience is not an anecdote. It is evidence. Communities are not beneficiaries of conservation. They are its stewards.

At a time when climate impacts are accelerating and pressure on land, oceans, and natural resources continues to grow, the choices we make about participation matter as much as the policies themselves. Lasting solutions cannot be designed for communities without being shaped with them. Environmental justice asks us to move beyond consultation and towards shared responsibility, trust, and decision-making.

That same thinking shapes the Ocean Justice Report this quarter. Protecting biodiversity cannot come at the cost of community rights. Lasting conservation depends on recognising the knowledge, leadership, and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in decisions about the places they have cared for across generations.

Witness 2.26 brings together stories of people documenting change, defending their environments, and imagining different futures. They remind us that environmental justice is ultimately about relationships: with one another, with nature, and with the responsibility to leave both stronger than we found them.

MANNAR RISING

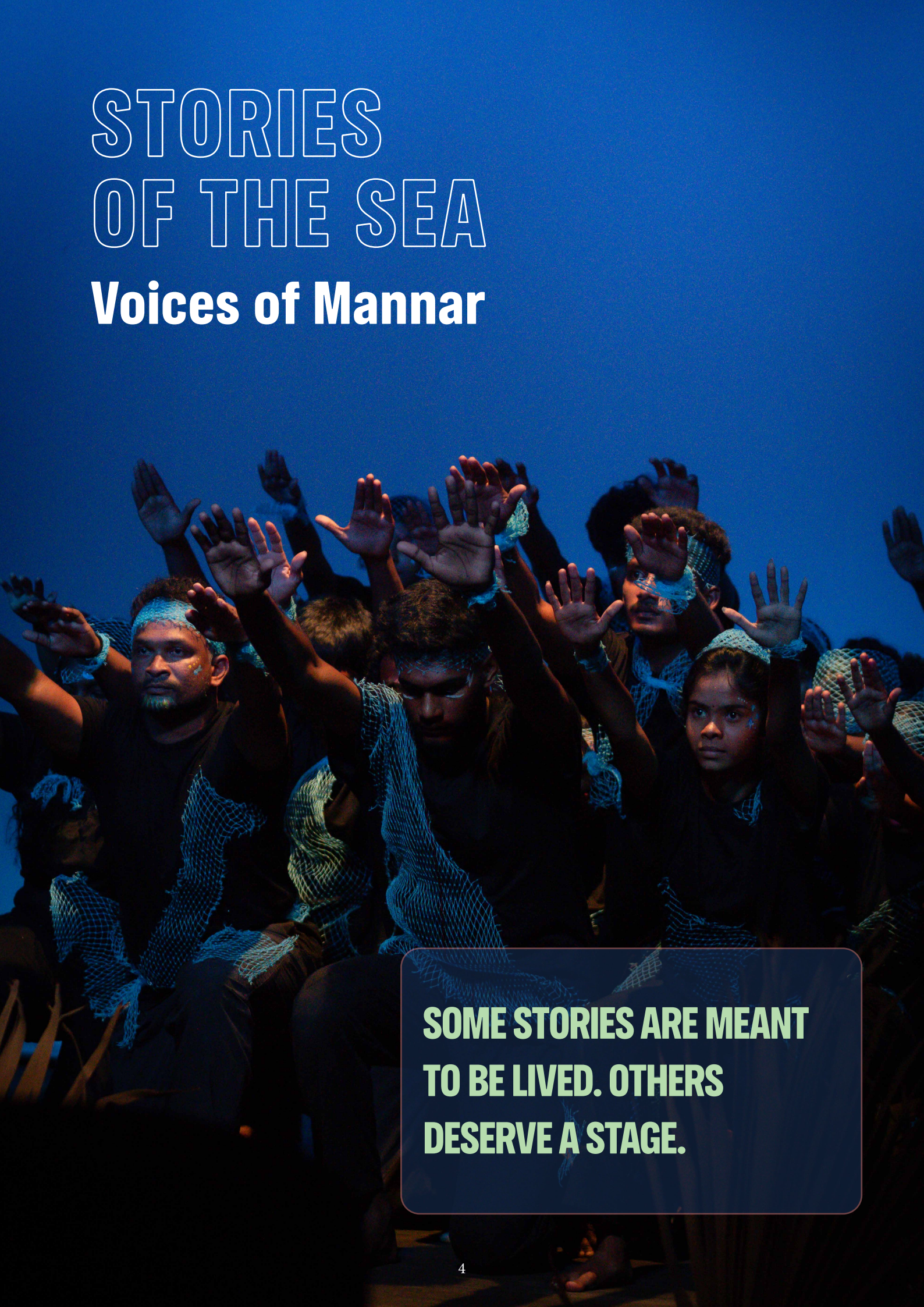
When Stories Returned To The People Who Lived Them.



This quarter, we continued working alongside coastal communities to strengthen biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and community leadership. From scientific research and youth learning to theatre and storytelling, the campaign explored new ways of protecting the Gulf of Mannar while ensuring that the people most connected to the ocean remained at the centre of the conversation.

STORIES OF THE SEA

Voices of Mannar



**SOME STORIES ARE MEANT
TO BE LIVED. OTHERS
DESERVE A STAGE.**



Ahead of World Oceans Day, Greenpeace South Asia brought together community artists from **Mannar, Stages Theatre Group (Sri Lanka), Beru Art and Cultural Foundation (India), and Adavi Arts Collective (India)** to co-create **Stories of the Sea: Voices of Mannar**.

By passing the mic to those living through the crisis, these stories help ensure that recovery is shaped by lived experience, not distance.

CREATION ACROSS BORDERS

Built through weeks of workshops, movement, storytelling, and collaboration, the performance transformed lived experiences of the ocean into a shared public memory. Fishers, women, youth, and coastal communities carried stories of climate change, labour, belonging, pollution, and hope from the shores of Mannar to audiences in Colombo, creating a space where communities became the storytellers of their own futures.

WATCH IN ACTION



“The entire play captured the essence of what the people are going through. I hope Greenpeace and the organisers get the strength to take it around the country and make more people aware.”

— Audience member, Colombo performance

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

HEAT HAS MANY STORIES

While Stories of the Sea brought community experiences to the stage, the Mannar Rising team continued documenting how rising temperatures and extreme weather are reshaping everyday life across the district.

For some, fish dry too quickly, reducing both quality and income. Others have shifted their working hours entirely to avoid dangerous daytime temperatures. Traditional livelihoods are becoming harder to sustain, while children's health, sleep, mobility, and access to work are increasingly shaped by extreme heat.

These stories remind us that climate change cannot be reduced to rising temperatures or carbon emissions alone. It reshapes bodies, livelihoods, culture, and the future of communities that have contributed least to the crisis. Responding to it requires both meaningful adaptation and urgent action to reduce emissions.

37° C

ALAN AARTHI

Palmyrah Craftswoman

"Many trees have disappeared. There is no shade anymore."

37° C

SEBASTIANPILLAI
ANTHONY PILLAI

Fisherworker

"I now fish through the night because the daytime heat is unbearable."

37° C

THIRUGNANATHEEPAN
JESUTHASAN RODGE

Dried Fish
Processor/Vendor

"Earlier, fish took one and a half days to dry. Now they dry in less than 24 hours, and we lose both quality and income."

FROM CRISIS TO COLLECTIVE FILM

This short documentary explores recovery, solidarity, and climate accountability in Mannar. The film continues building a growing archive of community-led storytelling, ensuring that lived experiences remain central to conversations about loss, resilience, and justice.

WATCH AND SHARE
THE FILM



SEAGRASS STUDY

Protecting what lies beneath the surface. In partnership with Blue Resources Trust, Greenpeace South Asia began a collaborative seagrass study across Mannar, documenting ecosystems that quietly sustain marine biodiversity, fisheries, and coastal resilience. The research will contribute to future conservation efforts across the Gulf of Mannar.

WATCH

YOUTH BIODIVERSITY TRAINING

“Learning from the place you call home”

Seventeen young people from across Mannar began the first phase of Greenpeace South Asia's Youth Biodiversity Training Programme. Designed as a five-month learning journey, the programme combines biodiversity literacy, field visits, ecosystem monitoring, and community conservation to strengthen youth leadership in protecting Mannar's unique coastal landscapes.



GREENPEACE
South Asia

CITY RISING

BANGALORE RISING
BANGALORE RISING
BANGALORE RISING

BLR
RISING

WHEN A CITY SCREAMED

On April Fool's Day, Greenpeace India invited Bengaluru to laugh at the absurdities it has quietly learned to live with. Months of Imaginariums, neighbourhood conversations, college engagements, and public listening culminated in The Scream, a city-wide intervention using humour and satire to question “stupid projects” and imagine cities built around people, accessibility, and care.



DELHI RISING
DELHI RISING
DELHI RISING

DELHI RISING

BUILDING EVIDENCE FOR HEAT JUSTICE

Delhi Rising entered its next phase with Walls of Evidence, a Labour Day mural created alongside workers and community members to highlight the unequal burden of extreme heat. The campaign also released Standing the Heat, analysing India's heat financing, while Heatwave Rising, a climate rap anthem created with Mahi G and residents of Sunder Nagri, transformed lived experiences into music. Together, these interventions continued building a people-led archive of climate evidence through stories, art, and public participation.



BUILDING THE MOVEMENT



FIREFLIES LAB

GROWING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CLIMATE STORYTELLERS.



The first cohort of Fireflies Lab completed Greenpeace South Asia's inaugural regional learning programme, bringing together participants from India and Sri Lanka for a three-month journey in climate justice, campaign design, storytelling, and digital mobilisation. Combining self-paced learning, live workshops, collaborative campaign challenges, and mentoring, the programme helped participants build practical skills while forming a new South Asian community of practice. Many have expressed interest in continuing to support Greenpeace campaigns and future editions of the Lab.



FROM CONSULTATION TO CONSENT

COMMUNITIES DESERVE MORE THAN CONSULTATION. THEY DESERVE CONSENT.

As Sri Lanka reviews key environmental acts, Greenpeace South Asia has been working alongside coastal communities to strengthen the recognition of **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** within biodiversity and conservation policy.

Through Focus Group Discussions with fishing communities in **Iranaitivu, Negombo, Rakawa, Vakarai**, and upcoming consultations in **Mannar, Kalpitiya, and Jaffna**, community members are documenting what meaningful participation should look like in decisions affecting their lands and waters.

The findings will contribute to an issue brief for the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan review, strengthen advocacy with the Sri Lankan government, and be carried forward to CBD COP17 later this year. Alongside the discussions, we also developed a community glossary in English, Sinhala, and Tamil, making biodiversity and conservation language more accessible to local communities.

A WORD FROM ACROSS THE WORLD



A JUST TRANSITION NEEDS TO START NOW

As countries accelerate the shift away from fossil fuels, one question continues to shape climate conversations worldwide: how can this transition be fair for workers and communities? Greenpeace's latest report calls for climate action that protects livelihoods, expands public participation, and ensures that no one is left behind as economies move towards cleaner energy.



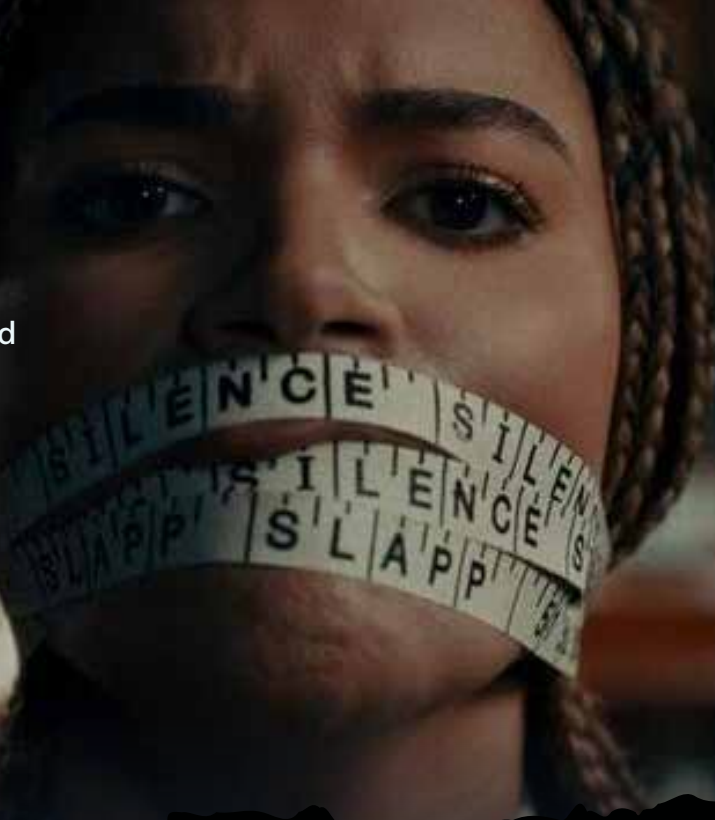
THE DEEP ARCTIC STILL HAS SECRETS TO TELL

A month-long Greenpeace-led scientific expedition to the Arctic deep sea documented vulnerable ecosystems, livestreamed more than 100 hours of underwater exploration, and identified several potential new species. The findings strengthen global calls for marine protected areas and a moratorium on deep-sea mining before these fragile ecosystems are irreversibly damaged.



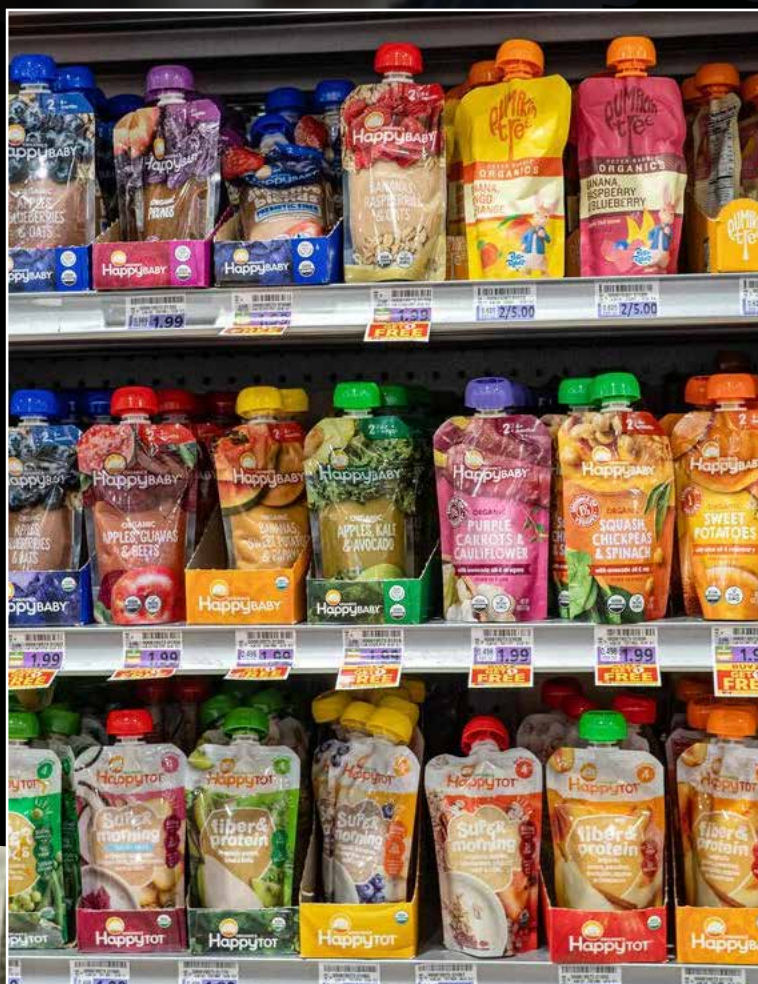
SPEAKING UP AGAINST SILENCING ACTIVISM

Greenpeace International secured an important legal victory in the preliminary phase of its anti-SLAPP case against Energy Transfer in the Netherlands. The case challenges the use of abusive lawsuits designed to intimidate environmental organisations and silence public participation, reinforcing the importance of protecting civic space and the right to dissent.



WHAT ARE WE FEEDING OUR CHILDREN?

New research commissioned by Greenpeace International detected microplastics in baby food sold in plastic pouches by two of the world's largest food companies, Nestlé and Danone. The findings renew concerns about plastic pollution entering food systems and highlight the need for stronger regulation and safer packaging.





SOLIDARITY MUST CROSS BORDERS

This quarter, Greenpeace's ship Arctic Sunrise joined the Global Sumud Flotilla, a peaceful civilian mission calling for safe humanitarian access to Gaza. The action reaffirmed Greenpeace's commitment to international law, humanitarian solidarity, and the protection of civilian lives during conflict.



KNOWLEDGE HUB

OCEAN JUSTICE REPORT

PROTECTING OCEANS BEGINS WITH PROTECTING THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEM BEST

From Patagonia to the Gulf of Thailand, coastal communities have cared for marine ecosystems for generations. Yet, too often, they are excluded from the decisions that shape their future.

Greenpeace South Asia's latest Ocean Justice Report argues that lasting marine conservation cannot be achieved through top-down policies alone. Drawing on case studies from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Senegal, and Chile, the report makes the case for a human rights-based approach that places Indigenous Peoples and local communities at the heart of ocean protection.

[READ THE REPORT](#)



Local fishing community, Chana
© Songwut Jullanan / Greenpeace

ACTION BOX

PROTECT THE OCEANS. STAND WITH THE COMMUNITIES THAT PROTECT THEM.

From Mannar to coastlines across South Asia, communities are defending the seas that sustain their lives and livelihoods. Add your name to the Ocean Justice Pledge and stand for healthy oceans, thriving coastal communities, and a future where people come before corporate profit.



**STOP
DEEP SEA
MINING!**
GREENPEACE

**TAKE THE PLEDGE AND
SHARE IT WITH YOUR
LOVED ONES>>**

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