

Headline: Britain's King Charles in UAE to urge action on climate at COP28

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Britain's King Charles speaks with a guest before a meeting with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), at Dubai Exhibition Centre, United Arab Emirates, November 30, 2023. Abdulla Al Neyadi/UAE Presidential Court/Handout via REUTERS

Britain's King Charles speaks with a guest before a meeting with the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), at Dubai Exhibition Centre, United Arab Emirates, November 30, 2023. Abdulla Al Neyadi/UAE Presidential Court/Handout via REUTERS

DUBAI — Britain's King Charles began visiting the United Arab Emirates on Thursday, during which he will advocate for greater global action and accountability on climate change at the COP28 summit.

The king, who arrived in the Gulf state overnight, is due to give an address on Friday at the UN climate negotiations that are scheduled to run in Dubai until December 12.

It will be his first major speech on climate change since he became monarch in September 2022. Other world leaders, including India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, are also expected to attend the talks. US President Joe Biden and China's President Xi Jinping are not.

After a year of record temperatures, the pressure is on for this year's summit to accelerate action to limit climate change. Countries, however, are divided over the future of fossil fuel – the burning of which is the leading cause of climate change.

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The host nation, the United Arab Emirates, is a major oil producer and member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and seeks to include the fossil fuel industry in the climate debate.

King Charles met with United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the COP28 site in Dubai late on Thursday, November 30. He was also briefly greeted by UAE Prime Minister and Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Nahyan.

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In an address to a reception at the COP28 site, attended by King Charles, United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell said the world was not moving fast enough to tackle climate change and urged those gathering in Dubai to reach a consensus.

"The world is at a crossroads. Heat records are tumbling across the world. The severity of climate impacts are worsening at a great cost to human life and livelihoods," he said.

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Earlier, King Charles held bilateral meetings with Nigerian President Bola Tinubu and Guyanan President Irfaan Ali at a hotel in Dubai. He also met with First Nations indigenous leaders and visited the local Dubai campus of Scottish university Heriot-Watt.

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The British monarch, 75, has campaigned on environmental issues for more than 50 years and is attending the summit on behalf of the UK government following an invite from the UAE.