

Press release

Top lawyers join forces to warn governments: act on climate or face the courts

Embargoed: 00:01am BST 27.09.2022.

Lawyers from over twenty organisations say countries must ramp up their climate action or face accountability in courts. Their open letter comes as the UN climate chief warns current plans are ["nowhere near"](#) what is required.

This is the first time in history that lawyers and NGOs around the world are coming together to warn governments that they must deliver stronger targets and actions by COP27 - as demanded by science - or face further legal action.

Sarah Mead Co-Director of the Climate Litigation Network said: *"Climate action is a legal duty. Yet governments are failing to comply with their own laws and commitments. We want to make sure that countries understand that the law is on our side. Lawyers and activists are using this advantage to hold governments accountable for their missed climate targets."*

The letter is part of the "Climate Trials" campaign, which highlights the wave of climate litigation cases against governments that have failed to take strong climate action, endangering people's basic rights.

Filippo Sotgiu, plaintiff in the [Italian climate case](#) and spokesperson for Fridays for Future Italy said: *"People are losing hope and trust. We can't keep relying on governments' goodwill to safeguard our rights and to protect our future. That's why activists around the world are turning to the law to make sure our suffering and human rights violations are minimised. If we look at recent cases, we can say: this tactic is working."*

Since the landmark successful Dutch climate case, [over 80 cases](#) have been filed to challenge governments' responses to the climate crisis. Governments facing litigation include all major emitters like Australia, Brazil, EU countries, US, South Africa, South Korea and Russia. These lawsuits have resulted in real-world emissions reductions in Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere.

Javier Dávalos González, Climate Program Coordinator, Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente (AIDA) added: *"The world is witnessing an avalanche of climate lawsuits that is unstoppable. Our cases are inherently intertwined. Courts are relying on landmark rulings from other countries so with every win we are building stronger ground for future hearings and new legal challenges targeting governments' inaction."*

Notes to editors:

The Climate Trials campaign is convened by the Climate Litigation Network. The Climate Litigation Network is an international project of the Urgenda Foundation that supports organisations, communities and individuals using litigation to compel national governments to ramp up their climate mitigation ambition.

Signatories:

Alana (Brazil), AIDA (Latin America and the Caribbean), Aurora (Sweden), The Australian Climate Case (Australia), Grata Fund (Australia), Phi Finney McDonald (Australia), Center for Environmental Rights (South Africa), Natural Justice (South Africa), Client Earth (Global), Climate Action Network Europe (Europe), Climate Case Ireland (Ireland), Ecojustice (Canada), Europäische Klimaklage (Austria), Germanwatch (Germany), Giudizio Universale (Italy), Rete Legalità per il Clima (Italy), A Sud (Italy), Global Legal Action Network (Global), Klimaatzak (Belgium), Klimatická (Czech Republic), Lawyers for Climate Action NZ (New Zealand), Lee Salmon Long (New Zealand), Notre Affaire à Tous (France), Adv. Padam Shrestha (Nepal), Plan B (UK), Protect the Planet (Germany), Russian Climate Case (Russia), Urgenda (Netherlands), Youth4ClimateAction (South Korea)

For interview requests with lawyers or plaintiffs please contact dorka.bauer@gscnetwork.org

ENDS