



YOUNG PEOPLE vs UK GOVERNMENT

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YOUNG PEOPLE SUE PRIME MINISTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND CLIMATE VIOLATIONS



Today, 1 May 2021, marking two years since [Parliament declared a climate emergency](#), three young people, **Adetola Onamade, 24**, **Marina Tricks, 20** and **Jerry Amokwandoh, 22**, working with the climate litigation charity Plan B and the Stop The Maangamizi Campaign, **served legal proceedings** on the **Prime Minister, Boris Johnson**, the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak and the Energy Minister, Kwasi Kwarteng, over the Government's failure to honour its Paris Agreement commitments.

Since the lives and future of the Claimants depend upon implementation of the Paris Agreement, that failure **violates their rights to life and to family life**, which are protected by

Articles 2 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>1</sup>. While the Government's climate failures threaten us all, as young people, with families in the Global South, the Claimants are exposed to disproportionate and discriminatory impacts and risks: the Government's complicity in the climate crisis also breaches ECHR Article 14.

Ahead of the UK's presiding role at the critical **UN climate talks in Glasgow (COP26)**, the claim lays bare the **dishonesty** of Boris Johnson's claims to "international climate leadership".

**First**, the Paris Agreement requires an **urgent and radical reduction of emissions**. Instead, the UK Government is granting **new oil and gas licences**, investing £27.4bn in the road network, **expanding aviation**, and [prior to an intervention from the US Government](#), was supporting the opening of a **new coal mine in Cumbria**. In March, the Public Accounts Committee revealed that [the Government has "no plan"](#) to implement its net zero target.

**Second**, the Paris Agreement demands that governments **prepare for the impacts** of climate change. The Committee on Climate Change, the Government's own statutory advisers, [has exposed the reality](#):

**"UK plans have failed to prepare for even the minimum climate risks faced"**.

**Third**, the Paris Agreement requires **finance flows** to be aligned to the temperature threshold of 1.5°C. To the contrary, a massive **15% of global carbon emissions** are supported through the **City of London**, while the [FTSE100 is heading for 4°C warming](#).

**Fourth**, the Paris Agreement requires countries such as the UK, which have historically contributed most to the crisis through their past emissions, to support those in Global South on the frontline, with **finance and tech transfer** and to provide compensation for those suffering **loss and damage**. Instead, the Government has decided at this time of global crisis to [cut vital supply lines of finance](#) (ie the repayment of carbon debt) from the communities most exposed to the impacts and risks.

It is the basic responsibility of the Government to safeguard the lives of the population from threats too complex for individuals to address on their own. The Government's climate hypocrisy is not only a violation of our trust and its duty of care to our young people. It is a breach of the law, both UK and international.

The **courts** are becoming a **critical site of resistance** against **climate breakdown and ecocide**. This case connects to a growing wave of successful climate litigation around the world, including recent victories before the highest courts in the [Netherlands](#), [Ireland](#) and (only this week) [Germany](#). The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has [fast-tracked a climate case](#) and ordered 33 Governments, including the UK Government, to respond.

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<sup>1</sup> As implemented into UK law by the Human Rights Act 1998

Juries in the UK, once they have heard the raw evidence, are [refusing](#) to [convict](#) climate protestors. The Government's response, meanwhile, is to threaten peaceful protestors with [10 years imprisonment](#).

The Government has **21 days to respond** to the Claim. The High Court will then decide whether to grant permission for a full hearing.

The Claimants seek:

- i) a Declaration from the Court that the Defendants' failure to take practical and effective measures to meet their Paris Agreement commitments breaches the Claimants' rights under the Human Rights Act 1998 (ECHR Articles 2, 8 and 14);
- ii) a Mandatory Order that the Defendants implement, with appropriate urgency, a legislative and administrative framework sufficient to meet those commitments.

Adetola Onamade, 24 said:

**“ We, as young people of the Global Majority, have witnessed the UK government fail to prepare and protect the most at risk in our communities who have disproportionately been on the frontlines of covid-19. This is no different to the government’s flippant approach to the international risks of this climate crisis. The UK, with its predominant wealth dependent on the fossil fuels of the Industrial Revolution, has a historic responsibility to transition its economy and to support others in adapting to do the same. It intends to repeat the crimes of colonialism and erasure of whole cultures, communities and families by not stopping the harm of current extractivism in West Afrika, Asia and Abya Yala. Instead of delivering on the Paris Agreement commitments, the government is preparing, with our taxpayer money, for 4 degrees warming. It is complicit in the destruction that our friends and family in the Global Majority face daily and it cannot comprehend the societal collapse that 4 degrees would mean.**

**Instead of readying the people of the Global Majority most at risk in the UK, it has provided empty promises, rhetoric and miseducation ahead of COP26. It is constantly eroding our human rights & ability to defend them - through state violence; now in the form of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill as well as preparing for eco-fascism through the Overseas Operation Bill. We will not allow this trajectory to continue, our families lives depend on it! Your Global family's lives depend on it!”**

Marina Tricks, 20, said:

**“This government is criminal and as a younger generation we will not be complicit. As a member of the Latinx diaspora, I will not be complicit in the murder**

**of my people, the selling off of my futures or the uprooting of our heritage communities. We want to live full lives not just lives running from disasters. We do not, want to live in a world in which our friends and families living in Abya Yala (Latin America and the Caribbean), Afrika and Asia are drowning, burning, starving or having to migrate because countries like the UK, who got rich off the back of colonialism, capitalism and slavery and who have a historic responsibility to tackle the climate crisis, are in fact deciding to carry on with business as usual instead of acting on their commitments under the Paris Agreement.”**

Jerry Amokwandoh, 22, said:

**“By the Government’s own admission it has failed to safeguard our fundamental human rights by ignoring its international obligations. Rather than funding repair for our communities, funding a sustainable future for our generation, and following the leadership of communities organising for planet repairs globally, in accordance with the Paris Agreement, we are being made to invest in our own deaths and continuing to finance ecocide, dispossession, and genocide. UK leadership means stopping the harm now, funding repairs right across society and taking seriously its commitments under the Paris Agreement.”**

Tim Crosland, Director, Plan B said:

**“There is no-one who takes seriously the Prime Minister’s preposterous and insulting claim to ‘climate leadership’. But it’s not enough to cry over the fact that, at this critical moment for our children, a corrupt and shambolic Government is presiding over the international climate negotiations at COP26. It’s time to expose the Government’s betrayal of our young people and global family for what it is and to obtain a Court order that compels the Government to take the Paris-compliant action on which our collective survival depends.”**

### **Notes for editors**

The UK remains a party to the European Convention on Human Rights despite Brexit.

To meet the Claimants, see their short film here:

<https://www.instagram.com/tv/Cl6JowBh2nl/?igshid=ne5spl7k598b>

The Claim in full is here:

<https://planb.earth/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SFG-FINAL-WITH-FOOTNOTES.pdf>

For a case Chronology see here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SeEOy-5lVWktvzZG5Ww7uWPbSa-358huJ7D1WdAA4Rw/edit>

The [Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide/Ecocide!](#) Campaign, connects this legal action to communities of resistance in the Global South and brings expert knowledge and practical organisational experience in critical legal praxis and its expression in 'law as resistance'.

Tim Crosland, Director, Plan B is to be tried by the Supreme Court on 10 May for contempt of court arising out of his decision to break the embargo on the Supreme Court's judgement on Heathrow expansion. The trial will be heard in the Royal Courts of Justice. See the letter from Sir David King and others: <https://planb.earth/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Supreme-Court-Expert-Letter.pdf>

Even with the current 1.2°C warming, people are dying and being displaced at scale. Research suggests the beyond the 1.5°C Paris goal:

1. the risks of multiple, simultaneous bread-basket failure rise substantially, threatening global food security (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308521X18307674>).
2. whole regions of the world will become uninhabitable (<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2021/mar/08/global-heating-tropical-regions-human-livability>)
3. we risk crossing a tipping point leading to a "hothouse earth" (<https://www.pnas.org/content/115/33/8252>)

For more information, contact [info@planb.earth](mailto:info@planb.earth), 07795 316164

**#AllRise #IAmWitness #RightToLife**

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