Global trends in climate change litigation: 2023 snapshot

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Case numbers rising year on year

- Over 2,340 cases
  - 1,590 in the US
- 2/3 since the Paris Agreement
- 190 cases in the last 12 months
- 2021 highest annual number of cases

Note: Up to end of May 2023, based on Sabin Center databases
Climate litigation continues to spread to new jurisdictions

51 countries

7 new jurisdictions: Bulgaria (2021), China (2016), Finland (2022), Romania (2023), Russia (2022), Thailand (2022), and Turkey (2021)

135 cases in the Global South

+ 50 cases before 11 International and regional courts, UN Treaty Bodies and the UNFCCC compliance committee
The number of strategic cases continues to grow

Not all strategic litigation is aligned with climate goals – e.g. ‘ESG backlash’ litigation

Proportion of strategic cases over time (%), outside the US, to 31 May 2023
Strategic cases increasing in numbers and diversity

**Climate-aligned**
- Government framework (80+)
- Corporate framework (17)
- Integrating climate considerations (206)
- Turning off the taps (28)
- Global guidance (4)
- Failure to adapt (14)
- Polluter pays (17)
- Climate-washing (57)
- Personal responsibility (8)

**Just transition cases**
- Distributional impacts of policies
- Challenge JT policies

**Non-climate-aligned**
- Regulatory powers
- Stranded assets
- SLAPPs
Corporate cases: more sectors and legal arguments

Number of cases against corporations by sector type including US and Global cases (2015–2022)
Future trends

- Litigation focused on the biodiversity-climate nexus
- Duties of governments and corporations to protect the ocean
- Litigation arising from extreme weather events where climate change is not the central focus
- Cases concerning short-lived climate pollutants
- International litigation between states
Thank you!

- Access the 2023 report

- Access the database:
  https://climate-laws.org

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