

**call for  
climate justice**

# Climate litigation against Holcim

**A summary of  
the interim ruling**

On 17 December 2025, the Cantonal Court of Zug declared admissible all claims in the climate litigation brought by Indonesian fishers against the cement company Holcim.

This represents an important interim victory for the four plaintiffs Ibu Asmania, Pak Arif, Pak Bobby and Pak Edi.

In principle, this clears the way for a substantive assessment of their claims. However, Holcim has announced that it will appeal the ruling on admissibility.



For the first time ever, a Swiss civil court has considered the important question of whether those affected by climate change can be entitled to legal protection.

The Cantonal Court of Zug has now answered this question affirmatively and carefully justified its ruling in a document spanning more than 50 pages.

## **An important interim victory for the four plaintiffs...**



## **...and for the commitment to climate justice worldwide:**

- 1. Climate change and its consequences are not an area in which the law does not apply:** Courts can examine whether major emitters are infringing the rights of others with their greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2. The people affected by climate change are not defenceless:** Individuals who are severely affected and harmed by climate change can demand the protection of their rights in court.



## The plaintiffs' demands of Holcim:

1. Proportional compensation for the climate damage they have suffered – commensurate to Holcim's contribution to global climate change
2. A significant reduction of Holcim's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions so that they align with the 1.5°C target set out in the Paris Climate Agreement
3. Financial participation in flood protection measures in their homeland on Pari Island in Indonesia, such as the planting of mangroves

A summary of  
the five main points  
of the ruling and  
their significance:



# 1. Civil courts have jurisdiction for climate litigation brought against companies:

In principle, everyone has the right to bring potential infringements of their rights before a court. The ruling makes it clear that this fundamental right also applies to climate-related issues. Climate litigation brought against companies falls under the jurisdiction of the civil courts.

This does not contradict the principle of the separation of powers. On the contrary, the court states: “Court decisions do not replace climate protection policies that are democratically legitimised [...]; instead they complement them.”

## **2. People who are particularly vulnerable to climate change can appeal to the courts:**

The court recognises that, by the four plaintiffs' accounts, they are directly and existentially affected by climate change, as they have already suffered tangible climate damage.

A legal need for protection, referred to as a "legitimate interest", is thus clear and the litigation is justified. Although climate change also potentially affects other people, this does not change the plaintiffs' personal need for protection.

### **3. Every company remains responsible for its emissions:**

Companies that generate a large volume of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions cannot escape responsibility by arguing that their actions would not make any difference anyway. With this justification, nation states would not have to reduce their emissions either, and any efforts to combat climate change would be moot.

The court also considers the assumption that, were Holcim to reduce the emissions it generates, these would instead be emitted by other companies, to be purely speculative. Rather, a favourable judgement for the plaintiffs would likely have a signalling effect on other companies.

Furthermore, harmful behaviour – such as excessive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – is not legitimate because others behave in the same manner. Instead, the court states that “every single contribution is essential in tackling climate change.”

## **4. Climate damage affects personality rights:**

The personality rights enshrined in Art. 28 of the Swiss Civil Code also include protection against the effects of climate change on physical integrity and personal freedom. The plaintiffs may therefore invoke these rights against Holcim as a contributor to climate change.

Fundamental and human rights may also be relevant in the interpretation of Art. 28, for example the right to respect for private and family life (Art. 8 European Convention on Human Rights).

## **5. The climate liability of major emitters will not result in a “free-for-all” of litigation:**

The admission of the climate litigation brought against Holcim does not run the risk of a flood of lawsuits with everyone pitted against each other.

In view of the fact that it is only specific companies that have made a very large contribution to climate change, the number of potential defendants is limited. There are significant differences between the extent to which carbon majors such as Holcim contribute to climate change and that of normal CO<sub>2</sub>emitters and individual people.



## Further information:

The full ruling is available for download  
(in German only):

[Ruling of the Cantonal Court of Zug  
of 17 December 2025](#)

Further information on the climate litigation:

<https://callforclimatejustice.org/en>

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