



Linda Sheehan

Organized by the [Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature](#), the 4th International Rights of Nature Tribunal met alongside the 23rd United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties to apply new legal options for incorporating nature's rights into climate and conservation decisionmaking.

Nine Tribunal judges, representing legal and environmental expertise from around the world, heard seven cases involving climate-related injuries to people and planet. Linda Sheehan with Planet Pledge assisted as a Prosecutor for the Earth, along with a co-Prosecutor based in Ecuador.



Tribunal judges weighed expert and witness testimony presented against the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, as well as existing nature's rights laws in various countries and international human rights and indigenous people's rights law. A number of those testifying were Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation grantees, working on the front lines to protect and restore ecosystems, species, and indigenous ways of life.

In all, 53 people from 19 countries presented the cases over two days. Indigenous peoples representatives provided guidance as Tribunal judges, experts, witnesses and ceremonial leaders, drawing the Tribunal's attention as well to the sacredness of Earth.

Cases included: Climate Change and False Energy Solutions; Financialization of Nature; Lignite Mining in the Hambach Forest; Defenders of Mother Earth; Water Extraction in Almeria, Spain; Threats to the Amazon (in Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil and French Guyana); and Trade Agreements. In each case, the judges found serious, systemic

violations of nature's fundamental rights to exist, thrive and evolve, as well as violations of human rights and specifically the rights of indigenous peoples. Detailed case summaries and rulings are being prepared and will be made available in the coming weeks.

Modeled on the [Permanent Peoples' Tribunals](#), the Tribunal was established in 2014 in Quito, Ecuador and formally constituted by a Peoples' Convention, signed at COP21 in Paris by a wide range of civil society organizations and indigenous communities. [International Tribunals have been held](#) to date in Ecuador, Peru, Paris, and now Bonn.

*Photo: Linda Sheehan, Executive Director, Planet Pledge*

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