

Youth and Colombia Forests

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Tropical deforestation does more than fuel global climate change, threatening all people. It also affects life prospects of local youth. So I am happy to see young people in Colombia stand up for their rights. Yesterday my legal adviser Dan Galpern filed my [Amicus Brief](#) in Colombia to support 25 plaintiffs, youth between ages 7 and 26, who are filing a tutela (guardianship) action, a mechanism that the Colombian Constitution provides to protect fundamental rights of individuals to a dignified life, health, food and water. The plaintiffs can be seen [here](#).

Deforestation threatens fresh water supplies, as half of the rain that falls in the Colombian Amazon is recycled rain. The impact of deforestation on ecosystems and freshwater, together with climate change, risks public health by helping spread vector-borne diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and zika.

Colombia, in the precatory 2015 Paris climate accord, committed to zero-net deforestation in the Colombian Amazon, the most biodiverse region in the world, by 2020. Instead the nation allowed deforestation to skyrocket in 2016 by 44 percent.

The legal action of the 25 youth has been filed before the Superior Tribunal of Bogota, with the support of [Dejusticia](#). Dejusticia is a Colombia-based research and advocacy organization dedicated to the strengthening of the rule of law and the promotion of social justice and human rights in Colombia and the Global South.

The youth are asking the government to formulate an action plan within six months to reach zero-net deforestation in the Colombian Amazon. Further, they are asking the government for an Intergenerational Agreement in which the authorities will commit to take effective and quantifiable measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.