

PLAN

[Press release, 12 December 2022](#)

BARRISTER RENOUNCES STATUS OVER “COURTS’ SUPPORT FOR CLIMATE GENOCIDE”

With the world [set to pass the 1.5°C temperature limit](#) in the Paris Agreement, and as the UK Government, hot on heels of COP27, approves [plans for a new coal mine](#), which Caroline Lucas MP has described as a “[crime against humanity](#)”, a former Government lawyer has renounced his professional status over what he describes as “*the British courts’ support for climate genocide*”. Tim Crosland, who is now the Director of the climate justice charity, Plan B, said:

“My maternal grandmother was a German Jew who escaped to England in the 1930s - just in time. Out of 15,000 German judges under the Nazi regime, only one, [Lothar Kreyssig](#), actively denounced the genocide as unlawful. Others were later tried and [convicted at Nuremberg](#) for their complicity in crimes against humanity.

The British Government knows full well that human-made climate change will annihilate whole peoples, whole regions of the world, and whole generations. It knows it will devastate our own country too. Yet it remains so captive to the fossil fuel industry that it permits the City of London to support [15% of global carbon emissions](#), [accelerates new oil and gas licences](#) in the North Sea and has just announced the opening of a [new coal mine in Cumbria](#). This is genocide. It is the ultimate crime against humanity and life on earth. It is only possible because of the complicity of the courts and certain members of the legal profession.

I have witnessed at first hand the [Supreme Court’s willingness to lie](#), in order to conceal from the public the deadly consequences of Heathrow expansion. And I watch on in horror as the courts send more and more of my friends and colleagues [to prison](#) - courageous and truthful people - for peacefully defending the life and lands that they love.

A barrister has the professional duty to respect the authority of the courts. But I cannot respect these courts any longer. Consequently, I have formally renounced my status as a barrister as an act of protest and conscience.”

[Antonio Oposa Jr.](#), Environmental Lawyer, The Philippines, Normandy Chair for Peace Ombudsman for Future Generations said:

“Many thousands of my countryfolk have lost their lives to climate change and many more have been displaced from their lands and their communities. The

Land, the Air and the Water (“The LAW”) - those are the first laws of life. Who are the real criminals? Those knowingly violating these laws or those standing up to defend them? That is the question Tim Crosland's decision presents."

[Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh](#), Associate Professor of Sustainability Law at Amsterdam Law School (Amsterdam University) and Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (University of the South Pacific) said:

"Tim Crosland's decision to renounce his barrister status is a courageous and principled one. It highlights the power imbalances inherent in our legal systems, which too often work to protect the vested interests of the fossil fuel sector while marginalising (or indeed even criminalising) those who stand up to them. We may hope that Tim's decision inspires others to think more seriously about their options for contributing to the fight against climate change, so that we can collectively work towards legal systems that work for the interests of society and the environment. "

[Rabbi Jeffrey Newman](#), Emeritus Rabbi of Finchley Reform Synagogue, said:

“Jews know only too well the role of the ‘bystander’ - those who recognise what is going on but do nothing. That led to genocide. What can we do now as we hasten whole peoples and species, towards destruction? Collaborate, support, network, come and work together with those courageous souls who cry out against the multitude (governments, courts, finance, water and energy companies, media). ‘Cease to do evil... learn to do good’ Isaiah 1:16-17”

Notes for editors

In December 2020, Tim Crosland [broke the embargo](#) on the Supreme Court judgment on Heathrow expansion and was subsequently convicted of contempt of court and fined £5,000.

Those publicly expressing support for his position included the Government’s former Chief Scientific Adviser, [Sir David King](#), the former special adviser to the UN Secretary General, [Professor Jeffrey Sachs](#) and the [Caroline Lucas MP](#).

In September this year, more than 250 lawyers (including many King’s Counsel), signed a letter warning that breach of the 1.5°C temperature limit threatens [mass loss of life and the collapse of the rule of law](#).

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