

The Bonaire Climate Case: The Right To be Heard

Abstract

Climate change is often discussed in terms of numbers – degrees, timelines, and targets. But on Bonaire, a Caribbean island that is part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, climate change is lived daily: in rising seas, extreme heat and the slow disappearance of land, coral and history.

This episode explores the Bonaire climate case, a landmark lawsuit filed by eight residents of Bonaire, in collaboration with Greenpeace, against the Dutch state. The case argues that Bonaire receives less climate protection than the European part of the Netherlands, an inequality the plaintiffs call unjust.

But this podcast goes beyond the courtroom.

Drawing on urban geographer Maria Kaika's essay "*Don't Call Me Resilient Again*", we examine how climate policy often relies on consensus, indicators and techno-managerial solutions, approaches that can mask inequality rather than address it. We ask: what happens when communities are told to be "resilient" instead of being protected?

Through personal testimonies, legal struggle and critical theory, the Bonaire case emerges as something more than a lawsuit. It becomes an act of dissensus: a demand for equality, accountability and the right to be heard.

The court's verdict in the Bonaire climate case is expected on January 28.

Team names

Maureen Oudshoorn. Edit, script writing, research, sound;

Mengxi Liu. Edit, script writing, research, and interviewer;

Bori van der Meer. Edit, script writing, research;

Jessica van Engel. Edit, script writing, research, narration;

Audre Jokubaukskye. Edit, script writing, and interviewer.

References

Bonaire's History. (2025). *InfoBonaire*. Available at:

<https://infobonaire.com/about-bonaire/history/> (Accessed: 15 January 2026).

College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2025, October 10). *Vijftien jaar na 10-10-10: De*

belofte van gelijkheid en de grenzen van het 'comply or explain'-principe. Retrieved

January 14, from

<https://www.mensenrechten.nl/actueel/nieuws/2025/10/10/vijftien-jaar-na-10-10-10-e-belofte-van-gelijkheid-en-de-grenzen-van-het-comply-or-explain-principe>.

Greenpeace International. (2025, October 7). *Residents of Bonaire and Greenpeace*

Netherlands sue the Dutch State for lack of climate protection.

<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/press-release/79104/residents-of-bonaire-and-greenpeace-netherlands-sue-the-dutch-state-for-lack-of-climate-protection/>

Greenpeace Nederland. (2023, May 17). *New research: climate change could have devastating impact on Bonaire*.

Greenpeace Nederland. (2024, February 22). *De impact van klimaatverandering op Bonaire: een analyse van verschillende scenario's en hun impact op de Nederlands Caribische gemeente*.

Harris, D. R., & Hoetink, H. (2025, May 28). *Netherlands Antilles*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Netherlands-Antilles>

Kaika, M. (2017). 'Don't call me resilient again!': the New Urban Agenda as immunology... or... what happens when communities refuse to be vaccinated with 'smart cities' and indicators. *Environment and urbanization*, 29(1), 89-102.

Klomp, A. (1979). *Politics on an "unprofitable" island: Resources and gatekeepers on Bonaire, N.A.* *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids / New West Indian Guide*, 53(3/4), 102-120.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41849011>

Show Notes

Openbaar Lichaam Bonaire. (n.d.). *Bestuurscollege*. Retrieved January 14, 2026, from <https://bonairegov.com/bestuur-organisatie/bestuurscollege>.

Oxfam Novib. (2022, October 19). *Rijke landen geven nog minder klimaatsteun dan gedacht*. Retrieved January 15, 2026, from <https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/actueel/nieuws/19714-rapport-klimaatsteun>.

Oxfam Novib. (n.d.). *Klimaatrechtvaardigheid*. Retrieved January 14, 2026, from <https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/waarom-oxfam-novib/themas/klimaatrechtvaardigheid>.

Sunwise Bonaire. (2024). *History of Bonaire: A fascinating journey through time*. Sunwise Bonaire. Available at: <https://sunwisebonaire.com/blog/history-of-bonaire-a-fascinating-journey-through-time/> (Accessed: 15 January 2026).

Van Heugten, Y. (2025, October 17). *Greenpeace versus de Staat: dit moet je weten om de Klimaatzaak Bonaire te kunnen volgen*. Follow the Money – Platform voor Onderzoeksjournalistiek. <https://www.ftm.nl/artikelen/greenpeace-versus-de-staat-dit-moet-je-weten-om-de-klimaatzaak-bonaire-te-kunnen-volgen>