



# Swiss Women Climate Change Case

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## Why in News?

The recent ruling by the **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** in favour of a group of Swiss women has significant implications for [climate change](#) litigation.

## What was the Swiss Women Climate Change Case?

- **Petitioners:** The case was brought against the Swiss government by **KlimaSeniorinnen Schweiz (Association of Senior Women for Climate Protection Switzerland)**, a group of women climate activists all above the age of 64.
- **Claim:** The women argued that the **Swiss government's inadequate climate policies violate their right to life** and other guarantees under the **European Convention on Human Rights**.
- **Medical Vulnerability:** The petitioners highlighted their medical vulnerability as senior citizens to [extreme heat caused by climate change](#).
  - Reports by the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) show that the Swiss population of senior women, especially those **over 75 are more prone to heat-related medical problems** like 'dehydration, hyperthermia, fatigue, loss of consciousness, heat cramps and heat strokes.
- **Court's Verdict:**
  - The ECHR noted that individuals have the right to effective protection from the serious adverse effects of climate change on their lives, health, well-being, and quality of life under **Article 8 of the convention**.
    - Article 8 of the Convention of Human Rights **includes the right for individuals to be protected by the state from the serious effects of climate change** on their lives.
  - The court found that the **Swiss government had not enacted adequate laws** to combat climate change impacts and failed to meet [greenhouse gas \(GHG\) emission goals](#).
- **Significance of Ruling:**
  - The **ECHR's verdict applies to 46 member states, including all European Union countries, plus the United Kingdom (UK) and various other non-EU countries**.
    - Climate and human rights cases in European courts must now heed ECHR's judgement, potentially spurring similar filings across member countries.
  - The global rise in climate litigation saw 2,180 cases filed by 2022, increasing from 884 in 2017 and 1,550 in 2020, according to the **Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review**.
    - This trend could spur further accountability, with judgments potentially impacting climate litigation worldwide.
  - The ruling emphasises the need to align policies with climate science.

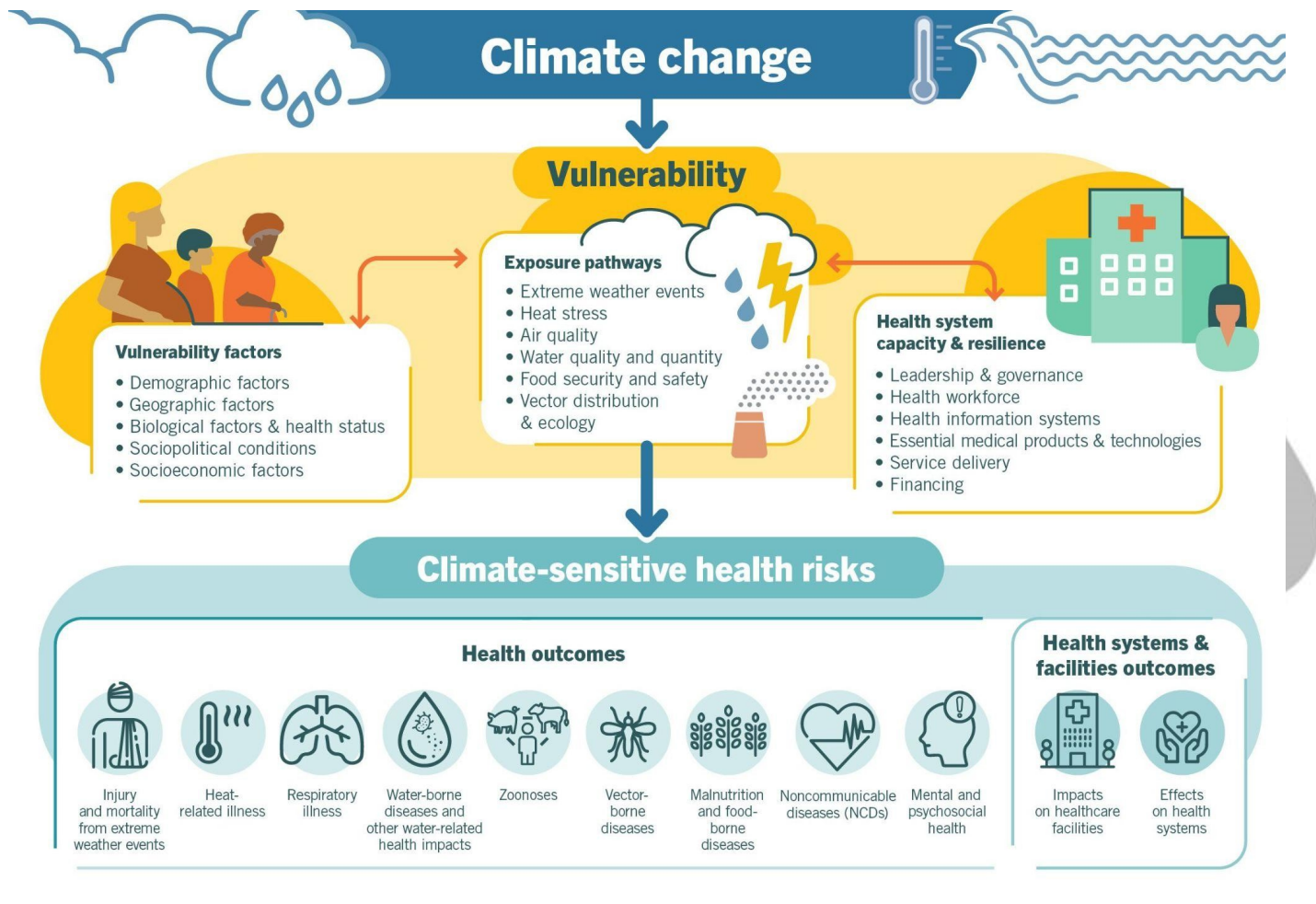
## Similar Cases

- In 2017, a 9-year-old girl from Uttarakhand filed a case in India, arguing that the **country's environmental laws and climate policies require greater action** to address climate change. However, her petition was ultimately rejected.

- In August 2023, Montana youths won a case against the state government, which **neglected climate change while approving fossil fuel projects**, violating their constitutional right to a clean environment.

## Protection Rights in India against Climate Change Impact

- The Indian Supreme Court broadened the scope of [Articles 14 \(right to equality\)](#) and [21 \(protection of life and personal liberty\)](#), stating that **people have the right to be free from the adverse effects of climate change**.



Read more: [Right to Protection from Climate Change Impacts](#)

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q. With reference to the 'Global Climate Change Alliance', which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)**

1. It is an initiative of the European Union.
2. It provides technical and financial support to targeted developing countries to integrate climate change into their development policies and budgets.
3. It is coordinated by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

**(a)** 1 and 2 only

**(b)** 3 only

**(c)** 2 and 3 only

**(d)** 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/swiss-women-climate-change-case>

