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# STRATEGIC REPORT

## ENVIRONMENT, PEACE AND SECURITY

### A CONVERGENCE OF THREATS

December 2016





# **Strategic Report: Environment, Peace and Security**

## **A Convergence of Threats**

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# The Convergence of Threats to Environment, Peace and Security

## Foreword

Abuse of the environment is the fourth largest criminal activity in the world. Worth up to USD 258 billion, it is increasing by five to seven per cent every year and converging with other forms of international crime. It is, therefore, a growing threat to peace, security and stability. This report assesses that threat and recommends solutions that we can pursue through international cooperation.

The many crimes related to the exploitation of the environment and its natural resources are insidious, with implications for every aspect of our lives. They rob governments of much needed revenues, people of livelihoods, and communities of peace and security. This report provides evidence that armed groups are benefitting from such crimes and engaging with wider criminal networks. The combined consequences are dangerous: forcing women and children into labour; putting habitats and biodiversity at risk; and undermining attempts to control global warming.

The scale, scope and complexity of this growing area of international crime are clear. Therefore, the scale, scope and force of the joint response from the United Nations, member states and key partners must be just as clear. It must include better information sharing, civilian protection and law enforcement, as well as a deeper understanding of what creates and spreads conflict.

The vast majority of countries believe fighting these crimes is a national priority and requires a stronger response. That is why UN Environment and INTERPOL are strengthening their partnership and offering greater support to member states. However, we can all do more. We hope that this report will encourage the international community to join forces with us in rapidly adopting a more comprehensive approach to tackling crime convergence in peace, security and sustainable development.

*Erik Solheim, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of UN Environment*

*Jürgen Stock, INTERPOL Secretary General*

# Table of Contents

<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY PROGRAMME</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.1 Objectives</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.2 Instruments</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3 Activities and Projects</b>	<b>17</b>
Project LEAF	18
Project Predator	18
Project Scale	18
Project Wisdom	18
The ECEC	19
<b>2.4 External Partners</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>3 UN ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.1 Objectives</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.2 Instruments</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.3 Environmental Rule of Law</b>	<b>22</b>
Key Activities	23
Legal Resources and Capacity-Building	23
<b>4 ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME FROM THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4.1 Value and Limitations of the Results of the Questionnaire</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4.2 Findings</b>	<b>27</b>
Environmental Crime Priorities	27
Crime Convergence	28
National Needs	29
<b>5 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>5.1 Air</b>	<b>32</b>
Criminal Activity	32
Criminal Supply Chain	33
Crime Convergence	33
INTERPOL's Response	34
<b>5.2 Land</b>	<b>34</b>
Criminal activity	35
Criminal Supply Chain	35
Crime Convergence	36
INTERPOL's Response	36
<b>5.3 Water</b>	<b>37</b>
Criminal Activity	38
Criminal Supply Chain	39
Crime Convergence	39
INTERPOL's Response	40
<b>6 BIODIVERSITY</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>6.1 Criminal Activity</b>	<b>41</b>
Elephants	41

Rhinos _____	42
Bears _____	42
Asian Big Cats _____	43
Antelopes _____	43
Great Apes _____	44
Pangolins _____	45
Tortoises and Turtles _____	45
<b>6.2 Criminal Supply Chain _____</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6.3 Crime Convergence _____</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>6.4 INTERPOL's Response _____</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>7 NATURAL RESOURCES _____</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>7.1 Forestry _____</b>	<b>49</b>
Criminal Activity _____	49
Criminal Supply Chain _____	50
Crime Convergence _____	51
INTERPOL's Response _____	52
<b>7.2 Fisheries _____</b>	<b>52</b>
Criminal Activity _____	53
Criminal Supply Chain _____	53
Crime Convergence _____	54
INTERPOL's Response _____	55
<b>7.3 Minerals _____</b>	<b>55</b>
Criminal Activity _____	56
Criminal Supply Chain _____	57
Crime Convergence _____	57
INTERPOL's Response _____	58
<b>8 FINDINGS _____</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>8.1 A High-Profit, Low-Risk Activity _____</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>8.2 The Criminal Supply Chain _____</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>8.3 A Transcontinental Traffic _____</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>8.4 Crime Convergence _____</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>9 A CONVERGENCE OF THREATS _____</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>9.1 Threats to Development _____</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>9.2 Threats to Peace and Security _____</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>10 RECOMMENDATIONS _____</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>NOTES _____</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Bibliography _____</b>	<b>72</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADF-NALU	Allied Democratic Forces – National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
BMEL	German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
CAR	Central African Republic
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCPCJ	Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals
COP 16	Conference of the Parties 16, CITES Bangkok 2013
CWIT	Combating WEEE Illegal Trade
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSS	Department of Safety and Security
ECEC	Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Committee
ECOLEX	Joint UN Environment/FAO/IUCN information service on environmental law
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ENS	Environmental Security Programme
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
ICCWC	International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
ILO	International Labour Office
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IST	Investigative Support Team
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature

IUU	Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing
LATF	Lusaka Agreement Task Force
LEAF	Law Enforcement Assistance for Forests project
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCB	National Central Bureau
NEST	National Environmental Security Task Forces
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODS	Ozone Depleting Substances
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIC	Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade
POPS	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
RIACM	Regional Investigative and Analytical Case Meeting
SAWEN	South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOCC	United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNTOC	United Nations convention against Transnational Organized Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAT	Value Added Tax
WCO	World Customs Organization
WEEE	Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment
WIST	Wildlife Incident Response Team

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environmental crime globally is valued at somewhere between USD 91 billion and 259 billion,<sup>1</sup> or up to twice the amount of global Official Development Assistance (ODA).<sup>2</sup> It is rising by 5-7 per cent annually<sup>3</sup> and is increasingly threatening not only governments' revenues, legitimate businesses and sustainable development, but also peace and security. This report summarizes some of the key areas in which INTERPOL and UN Environment are developing their strategies and activities to counter environmental crime – a collective term describing any illegal activity carried out by a criminal entity to generate profits, which results in harm to our ecosystem, by damaging environmental quality, hastening biodiversity loss, and depleting natural resources.

Our ecosystem relies primarily on the conservation of environmental quality, biodiversity, and natural resources. It is therefore crucial to address crimes impacting these areas:

- *Environmental quality*: crimes adversely affecting air, land, and water typically involve companies and/or organized crime groups which contribute to threatening environmental quality;
- *Biodiversity*: elephants, rhinoceroses,<sup>4</sup> bears, Asian big cats, antelopes, great apes, pangolins, turtles and tortoises are species which are endangered as a direct result of poaching and trafficking, revealing a well-established criminal supply chain;
- *Natural resources*: criminal activities associated with and resulting from illegal logging, illegal fishing and illegal mining deplete the planet's essential resources. A variety of players are implicated in these crimes, ranging from those involved in the harvesting or extraction phases, to the international sellers.

From information and intelligence gathered by INTERPOL and UN Environment, environmental crime appears to be characterized by:

- *A high-profit, low-risk nature*: the opportunities for large profits, coupled with the low risk of being arrested encourage criminal entities to engage in environmental crime;
- *A criminal supply chain*: environmental commodities are trafficked with the help of a large number of criminals who intervene at various stages, forming a criminal supply chain;

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