

Committee: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Issue: Bolstering international cooperation in preventing and combating smuggling of natural resources

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Konstantina Plesti and I am an IB1 student at HAEF Psychico College. This will be the 2nd time I attend ACGMUN, my 9th conference overall, and 2nd time chairing. For this year's conference, I have the great honor of serving as one of the Deputy Presidents of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). ECOSOC is one of my favorite committees, being the first committee I ever participated in.

First of all, I want to congratulate you all for participating in this committee for the 7th session of ACGMUN. During the conference, I hope that we will be able to get to know each other, prepare resolutions, debate, and have a great time! This year's topics are closely related to the theme of this year's conference: Reaching Net-Zero, which means being able to balance the number of greenhouse gases that are emitted to the atmosphere to the amount that is removed from the atmosphere, thus being as close to zero as possible. This study guide concerns the 3rd topic of the agenda, and it should provide you with the fundamental information on this topic. Nevertheless, you are highly encouraged to conduct your own research to get a better and more profound understanding of the topic. The bibliography can be beneficial to the research process.

Should you have any questions about the topic, committee, or conference in general, do not hesitate to contact me via email at kplesti@athenscollege.edu.gr.

I look forward to meeting all of you in March!

Best regards,

Konstantina Plesti

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Natural resources-related illegal trade involves the illicit trafficking of non-renewable resources such as fuels and minerals, and renewable ones such as wildlife, forestry, and fishery.¹ Nowadays, taking into consideration the extent of smuggling of natural resources, it constitutes an environmental crime, which directly has a harmful impact on the environment as well as a Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) in most cases, which directly affects public financing capacities of states and can obstruct economic development through tax evasion and illicit financial flows.²

Environmental crimes and TOC including smuggling of natural resources have experienced a rise and are a growing threat to natural resources, peace, development, security, stability, and the environment. Consequently, it is vital to bolster international cooperation to tackle this multifaceted issue effectively and peacefully. There have been numerous attempts to deal with this matter, with most of the efforts made being unsuccessful and/ or causing a violent conflict. It is also worth noting that organized criminal groups take advantage of environmental crimes to launder money from drug trafficking³, thus making illegal trade, smuggling of natural resources, and other environmental crimes an issue that doesn't affect only the environment. There are many ways to combat the trafficking of natural resources, but it is required for all Member States to work collaboratively to resolve this complicated issue.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Artisanal Mining

Artisanal and small-scale mining, or ASM, is a largely informal economic sector that includes workers around the world who use basic tools to extract from the earth everything from gold and gemstones to vital metals such as cobalt, tin, tungsten and tantalum.⁴

¹"---." *Illicit Trade*, [www.illicittrade.org/natural-resourcesrelated-trade#:~:text=Natural%20resources%2Drelated%20illegal%20trade,\(UNEP%20INTERPOL%3B%20IISD\)](http://www.illicittrade.org/natural-resourcesrelated-trade#:~:text=Natural%20resources%2Drelated%20illegal%20trade,(UNEP%20INTERPOL%3B%20IISD))

²"Transnational Organized Crime: A Threat to Global Public Goods." *SIPRI*, 2 Sept. 2022, www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-background/2022/transnational-organized-crime-threat-global-public-goods#:~:text=Transnational%20organized%20crime%20directly%20affects,evasion%20and%20illicit%20financial%20flows

³Environment, UN. "The Rise of Environmental Crime: A Growing Threat to Natural Resources Peace, Development and Security." *UNEP*, www.unep.org/resources/report/rise-environmental-crime-growing-threat-natural-resources-peace-development-and. Accessed 29 Oct. 2023.

⁴"Artisanal Mining." *InforMEA | United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements*, www.informea.org/en/terms/artisanal-mining

Environmental Crime

Environmental crime covers the gamut of activities that breach environmental legislation and cause significant harm or risk to the environment, human health, or both.⁵

Illegal Wildlife trafficking

Illegal wildlife trafficking is any environment-related crime that involves the illegal trade, smuggling, poaching, capture, or collection of endangered species, protected wildlife (including animals and plants that are subject to harvest quotas and regulated by permits), derivatives, or products thereof.⁶

Illicit trade

An illicit activity or substance is not allowed by law or the social customs of a country.⁷

Mediator

A person or an organization that tries to get agreement between people or groups who disagree with each other.⁸

Natural Resources

Natural resources are any biological, mineral, or aesthetic asset afforded by nature without human intervention that can be used for some form of benefit, whether material or immaterial. What is considered a “resource” has varied over time and from one society to another. Examples of assets that can be considered natural resources include forests, surface water, groundwater, and the fertile lands or

⁵“Environmental Crime.” *Europol*, www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas/environmental-crime. Accessed 29 Oct. 2023.

⁶*What Is Wildlife Trafficking?* <http://www.wildlifetrade.wcs.org/Wildlife-Trade/What-is-wildlife-trafficking.aspx#:~:text=Illegal%20wildlife%20trafficking%20is%20any>

⁷“ILLICIT TRADE Definition and Meaning | Collins English Dictionary.” *Collins Dictionaries*, 29 Oct. 2023, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/illicit-trade

⁸*Mediator Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com.* www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/mediator#:~:text=mediator-,noun,who%20disagree%20with%20each%20other

the soil and minerals within them, as well as energy resources contained within layers of rock.⁹

Smuggling

Smuggling is the conveyance of things by stealth, particularly the clandestine movement of goods to evade customs duties or import or export restrictions.¹⁰

Transnational Organized Crime (TOC)

Transnational organized crime refers to those self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate transnationally to obtain power, influence, monetary and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/ or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms.¹¹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current situation of smuggling of natural resources

Environmental crimes are generally more difficult to assess due to the unavailability of statistics and data on illegal activities. Environmental crimes include white-collar environmental crimes, fishery crimes, forestry crimes, and illegal wildlife trade. This phenomenon and the lack of a national database to contain information on such crimes complicate the moderation of environmental crimes and is one of the main reasons why these kinds of crimes seem to have experienced growth. This happens because of low awareness of the topic of environmental crimes and the effective methods such criminals use for laundering in the enforcement sector. Indeed, the last decades have experienced a rise in environmental crimes by an annual growth rate in the range of at least 5 to 7% with examples as high as 21 to 28% in some species and items¹². It is also interesting to consider that this growth rate closely

⁹The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Natural Resource | Definition, Examples, and Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/science/natural-resource

¹⁰"Smuggling | Illegal Trade, Contraband, Trafficking." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 24 Oct. 2023, www.britannica.com/topic/smuggling

¹¹"Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Definition." *The White House*, www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/definition#:~:text=Transnational%20organized%20crime%20refers%20to,pattern%20of%20corruption%20and%2F%20or

¹² UNEP. "The rise of environmental crime." www.api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9788269043419_A38839343/preview-9788269043419_A38839343.pdf

corresponds with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in many Asian states that are primary recipients of illegal wildlife products, ozone-depleting substances, or substitutes such as CFCs and HCFCs, chemicals, and waste. While the UN has made considerable progress in combatting environmental crime in isolated and serious cases, environmental crime is still increasing rapidly, posing a significant threat to development, peace, and security.

The smuggling of natural resources, that is the illicit trade of both renewable and non-renewable resources, has been a problem for many years, and in recent years as mentioned, an increase has been noted. Natural resource exploitation normally follows a pathway to reach a point of extracting profit. This pathway normally includes mining and extraction, the supply of goods or services, trading, refining, and sale. The illegal trade of natural resources is more prevalent in nations where poverty, weak governance, and corruption prevail. However, the trafficking of natural resources constitutes a great threat to all member states, affecting them in various ways. Some member states are currently experiencing an environmental crime crisis, which is an extension of the smuggling of natural resources. Consequently, international cooperation with all Member States is required to moderate the situation.

The role of stakeholders

When considering the problem of smuggling of natural resources, there is a need to view the key stakeholders and their roles in this situation as victims or contributors to the problem. Initially, the current legal framework shaped by the respective governments and governmental bodies enables natural resource mismanagement in a lot of regions, and even in some cases regulations for equal access to natural resources while upholding environmentally sustainable practices are non-existent. Many current laws do not ensure the strengthening of supply chain transparency or the responsibility for environmental stewardship. Other systematic drivers of illegal practices include corruption, that is the exploitation of weak regimes, especially in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), which lack the capacity and resources for surveillance and monitoring. Vulnerability to corruption is due to the gatekeeping function exercised by governments, as well as the distribution of resource rights, the control, and distribution of large resource revenues, the limited competition between key economic actors, and the ambiguity between the private and public sectors. This increases in conjunction with the discretionary power to make distinctions between the public and private interests. The lucrative illegal trade in natural resources attracts transnational organized crime groups. Additionally, non-state armed groups, terrorists, and other criminals also commit environmental crimes, undermining and threatening peace, security, and development, while proceeding to financial armed conflict, controlling territories, and looting the natural resource wealth of a country. Consequently, environmental crime constitutes the fourth largest

crime in the world, after drug trafficking (\$344 billion), counterfeiting (\$288 billion), and human trafficking (\$157 billion)¹³.

Previous Cases of Smuggling of Natural Resources

In the past years, there have been numerous incidents concerning the smuggling of natural resources. The majority of such cases took place in Asia and Africa, as they are rich in the natural resources demanded and in certain instances, the framework allows more flexibility and does not have that many constraints.

The first case study that needs to be considered is the Sierra Leone Diamond Trade. Alluvial diamond mining is one of the main sources of employment in Sierra Leone, but more is needed for their livelihood and alluvial diggers are thus in need of a second source of income. The government of Sierra Leone states that, after the reform of PM Stevens, there are 17 small-scale mining companies and 200,000 artisanal miners that operate in the country. Mining is vital for Sierra Leone, accounting for 20% of the nation's GDP¹⁴. While Sierra Leone does not experience conflicts caused by the trade of diamonds, illegal diamond trade is still an issue. Today, in Sierra Leone, diamonds are easily accessible, and the fact that they often are extracted and traded outside supervision and regulation in an otherwise corrupt environment creates a risk that diamonds are exploited for money laundering, criminal activity, and terrorist financing. With the regulation of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), that is the certification process to ensure that diamonds are 'conflict free', the diamonds are regulated, the system can be abused through forged documentation, which is a tool for integrating illicit diamonds into the legal value chain and is further abused through bribery. Consequently, due to the weaknesses of the current power structure, there are still illicit activities that can, however, be moderated should there be government intervention with financial incentives or any means to eradicate the respective weaknesses.

A second case study is about Liberia and Timber. Liberia is a country rich in natural resources with timber being one of its most important factors of economy. Logging remains important to Liberia, but it is worth noting that regardless of its benefits to the economy, local communities do not receive any of those benefits. The illicit timber trade has been a long-standing problem for Liberia. Following the civil war and the cease of an 'open door policy', meaning not allowing it to have equal access to Chinese markets, Liberia has received bilateral aid with much attention being directed towards good governance initiatives. There have been certain efforts made

¹³ "Researchers Receive Crime Fighting Grant." *Dakota State University*, 6 Dec. 2023, www.dsu.edu/news/2021/08/researchers-receive-crime-fighting-grant.html

¹⁴ World Bank. "PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID) CONCEPT STAGE." www.documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/731881468104060497/pdf/SLOMTAPOPID1Concept0Stage0final.pdf

to moderate the situation, but certain projects increased the 'isomorphic mimicry', which means that the government acted like reforms were implemented and progress was being made. Reforms, in general, have failed mainly due to the 'lack of political will'. There is still a lack of oversight due to the restricted capacity and fake certificates are still prevalent and there are issues with hacking into databases due to the lack of security and resources allocated.

Who is affected

The weak management of natural resources causes the uneven and disproportionate distribution of resources to people from LEDCs who are more likely to depend directly upon these resources for their livelihood, thus creating and increasing inequalities on an international scale. Local communities or regional indigenous groups also experience environmental degradation and social disruption as sequent to the process of smuggling natural resources. Moreover, the illicit trade and other illegal activities concerning the smuggling of natural resources can pose a grave threat to human health. More specifically the illegal trade of wildlife has been associated with the spread of diseases thus being correlated to profound implications for human health, such as the spread of COVID-19. Another example is the detrimental effect of illegal mining and thus exposure to harmful substances on the local communities caused by illegal mining practices.

Causes

The smuggling and illicit trade of natural resources have experienced growth and are mainly driven by interrelated causes. There are numerous causes that are increasing these crimes. Firstly, the demand and economic incentive from the smuggling of natural resources incite individuals and organized criminal groups to engage in such illegal activities. For instance, illicit wildlife trafficking has become a multi-billion-dollar industry¹⁵, thus being lucrative and incentivizing even more people to partake in such activities. High demand and profit as well as low enforcement, punishment, and prosecution have caused such crimes to take place more and more often with bribery and social networking facilitating this process even further. Weak governance and corruption are also the main and vital factors of illicit trade. They prevent good governance principles and structures and facilitate violations or bending of the laws without punishments or consequences for the prosecutors, thus providing them even further with the incentive to increase illegal activities regarding natural resources. Another reason why an increase has been

¹⁵*Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)*, www.globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Global-Illicit-Economy-GITOC-Low.pdf. Accessed 9 Dec. 2023.

observed is due to poverty and the lack of technological capacity and/or infrastructure of certain nations. Poverty incites people to get involved in environmental crimes or TOC to make a living or raise even more money. Finally, another one of the main driving factors of this problem is the lack of both national and international legal frameworks. The majority of frameworks are either outdated or weak. Consequently, nations need to reconsider and make their respective frameworks stronger and there is an urgent need for international collaboration to establish a strong international legal framework and moderate the situation.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the nations that have been mostly affected by transnational organized crime and illegal trade in general. In fact, it is estimated that in Kinshasa, the capital of DRC, 10-30% of illegal trade in wildlife, gold, and timber goes to transnational organized criminal networks based outside eastern DRC.¹⁶ These crimes incite an increasing number of conflicts in the eastern region of the country, according to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Except for the political insurgency, the Government of DRC, supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) is also confronting a growing number of illegal operations conducted by transnational organized criminal groups involved in large-scale smuggling and laundering of natural resources. According to some estimates, illicit natural resources exploitation in eastern DRC is valued at over USD 1.25 billion per year (USD 722-862 million if excluding diamonds also sourced outside eastern DRC).¹⁷ Consequently, due to the severe and threatening circumstances, there is a need for further concerted action in the region.

Indonesia

The government of Indonesia has made efforts to moderate and eradicate all transnational organized crime, including the problem of smuggling of natural resources. Indonesia has steadily increased the capacity of institutional actors and agencies, including the training of special units to combat such crime and trafficking,

¹⁶United Nations Environment Programme. "Organized Crime in Wildlife, Gold and Timber, Worth Over One Billion USD, Further Fuels Conflict in Eastern DR Congo - UN Report." *UNEP*, www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/organized-crime-wildlife-gold-and-timber-worth-over-one-billion-usd-further#:~:text=Every%20year%20gold%2C%20minerals%2C%20timber,surrounding%20areas%20in%20eastern%20DRC

¹⁷ United Nations Environmental Programme , https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22074/UNEP_DRCongo_MONUSCO_OSES_G_final_report.pdf

whilst having been successful in convicting prosecutors of such offenses.¹⁸ The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Indonesia in cooperation with the Government of Indonesia and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation is working towards making a stronger justice system and increasing the capacity of institutional actors and agencies. Despite all the efforts made, Indonesia still faces TOC and trafficking, which could be explained by its geographic makeup, which renders it vulnerable to the trafficking of people, drugs, and natural resources.

United Kingdom (UK)

The illegal trade of wildlife is a major problem in the UK, which is a significant transit and trade country.¹⁹ The UK Ambassador Barbara Woodward delivered a speech at the UN Security Council in 2022 emphasizing the connection between illicit trade of natural resources and conflict. The London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade (13th February 2014) recognized the trafficking and poaching as organized crime and supported the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), thus further contributing and moving towards tackling and moderating the issue.

United States of America (USA)

The United States deems the issue of trafficking of natural resources as a worldwide concern with far-reaching implications for the environment, public health and safety, and socio-economic development.²⁰ The Environmental and Natural Resources Division of the US Department of Justice has made numerous efforts to counteract this issue both on a national and global scale. These are mainly implemented and discovered via the Environmental and Natural Resources Division of the Department. The Department has also implemented transnational organized crimes including wildlife and timber trafficking as well as other environmental trafficking crimes.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is working towards countering environmental crime with local, regional, and global initiatives. The UNODC with partnerships with regional, national, and international bodies and

¹⁸“Trafficking and Organized Crime - UNODC Indonesia Office.” *United Nations : UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific*, www.unodc.org/roseap/en/indonesia/trafficking-organized-crime.html

¹⁹*European Parliament*, [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578963/IPOL_IDA\(2016\)578963_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2016/578963/IPOL_IDA(2016)578963_EN.pdf). Accessed 2 Nov. 2023.

²⁰“Natural Resources-related Trade — Illicit Trade.” *Illicit Trade*, www.illicittrade.org/natural-resourcesrelated-trade

agencies is making efforts to provide regional and subregional networks with coordinated support to national wildlife law enforcement agencies. The UNODC is also trying to improve the existing laws and increase international collaboration. The Office also assists in the fight towards mitigating this issue by sharing the information with the public and subsequently raising awareness.

Centre for the Investigation of Transnational Environmental Crimes (CITEC)

Thailand in cooperation with UNODC opened a crime command center that focuses on national and regional operations against transnational criminal networks. CITEC is the first facility of the NED to bring dedicated wildlife crime analysts and investigators together to coordinate operations to address transnational crime networks, with facilities to communicate directly with frontline officers via secure video conferencing²¹. This is an extremely useful division as it is one that specializes in addressing the issue, making it more efficient in implementing necessary measures.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1 st July 1975	CITES was signed by 173 countries in order to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
25 th October 2002	Letter from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN addressing the President of the Security Council
31 st August 2005	Resolution 1620 adopted by the Security Council (SC) to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL).
13 th February 2014	London Declaration on Illegal Wildlife Trade signed by 42 Governments at the London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade held on 12-13 February 2014.

²¹“Thailand and UNODC Open New Environmental Crime Command Centre to Mark World Wildlife Day.” *United Nations : UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific*, www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2021/03/world-wildlife-day-thailand/story.html

6 th October 2022	Speech delivered by Ambassador Barbara Woodward at the UN Security Council on strengthening the fight against the financing of armed groups and terrorists through the illicit trafficking of natural resources.
5 th May 2023	Resolution 31/1 was adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for the establishment of a stronger international legal framework.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Resolution 1620 adopted by the Security Council at its 5254th meeting, 31 August 2005

The Resolution 1620 was adopted by the Security Council (SC) in 2005 in order to establish the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) for 12 months in order to aid the Government of Sierra Leone in the process of, along with others, coordinating and collaborating with UN missions and movements of small arms, human trafficking and smuggling and illegal trade in natural resources.²² The UNIOSIL was also established in the hopes of creating a culture of peace, dialogue, and participation, which could be correlated to the smuggling of natural resources. While the UNIOSIL was later succeeded by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), there was progress in the creation of a culture of peace, dialogue, and participation from the latter, which could indicate progress in the smuggling of natural resources and illicit trade.

United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto adopted by the UN General Assembly, 15 November 2000 (55/25)

The United Nations Convention against TOC is the main instrument in order to combat this kind of crime and is further supplemented by three Protocols, which target specific areas and manifestations of organized crime: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol

²²UN. Security Council (60th year : 2005). "Resolution 1620 (2005) /: Adopted by the Security Council at Its 5254th Meeting, 31 August 2005." *United Nations Digital Library System*, 31 Aug. 2005, www.digitallibrary.un.org/record/556055?ln=en

against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition.²³ While the UN Convention has not yet included the Trafficking of natural resources or illicit trade and has focused more on the human rights violations of transnational crime, the Convention still represents the stepping stone for fighting all types of TOC.

Resolution on strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife from the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, 5 May 2023 (31/1)

The Resolution 31/1 adopted by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice aims for a stronger international legal framework and for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife, addressed the possibility of establishing an additional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime that would address any gaps regarding natural resources and especially the trafficking of wildlife and addressed the sharing of practices and challenges that the Member States have faced to tackle the issue holistically and efficiently. This resolution constitutes the stepping stone for addressing the issue of smuggling of natural resources, moderating it, and finally eliminating it should all Member States agree.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement, signed by 184 countries in 1973 in order to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The Convention aims to moderate and forbid international trade in species under threat. CITES remains one of the vital factors of international conservation with more than 38,000 species being regulated in trade. International trade often threatens wildlife during border activities, thus CITES is needed and is a vital step in tackling the issue fully.

EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking

The European Union considers the problem of smuggling of natural resources as a global threat and takes action with the EU action plan in order to decrease wildlife trafficking and combat illegal activities within the EU borders. Wildlife trafficking is one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide generating between 8 to 20

²³“United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime.” *United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html

EUR billion annually²⁴. Wildlife trafficking undermines the efforts made to mitigate efficiently global threats to biodiversity and many key goals in EU foreign policy and development support, including sustainable development, the rule of law, good governance, and peace and stability.²⁵

Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT)

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) is an independent, private sector initiative that aims to change the current situation of illegal trading activities whilst mitigating the economic and social damages of illicit trade by strengthening government enforcement mechanisms and mobilizing businesses across industry sectors most impacted by illicit trade.²⁶ The TRACIT makes recommendations which, if applied, will moderate the situation and tackle common bottlenecks, trends, and vulnerabilities that will ultimately aid in moderating the smuggling of natural resources.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation

A reason why the smuggling of natural resources prevails is the lack of a strong international legal framework that states the consequences of committing an environmental crime like the trafficking of natural resources. Should said framework exist, then perpetrators may be more reluctant to commit such a crime. This could be included as a protocol for all forms of environmental crimes that can be considered as TOC in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto as addressed in Resolution 31/1 for wildlife trafficking. This change would ultimately be a vital step to ensure the bolstering of international cooperation on the issue of trafficking of natural resources and illicit trade since although it does not ensure that the issue is fully tackled, it may limit it.

Intervention of mediators and natural resources experts

The intervention of mediators and natural resources in world discussions would encourage cooperation over shared benefits and encourage all stakeholders to take part in solving the matter. Mediators and specialists have to be aware of the context, shared benefits, and importance of natural resources to the respective

²⁴ "Illegal Wildlife Trade Has Become One of the 'world's Largest Criminal Activities'." *INTERPOL | The International Criminal Police Organization*, www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2023/Illegal-wildlife-trade-has-become-one-of-the-world-s-largest-criminal-activities

²⁵ "Press Corner." *European Commission - European Commission*, www.ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/MEMO_16_388

²⁶ "Official Documents." *GOV.UK*, GOV.UK, 25 Mar. 2020, www.gov.uk/official-documents

community, tribes, etc. in order to be resolved in a peaceful manner whilst taking into account the ubiquity and complexity of the issues resolved. All Member States seriously affected should partake in this process to ensure stability, security, and a culture of peace within their territorial borders and with other states.

Stronger in-country analysis and information capacity

All Governments of Member States ought to be able to identify transnational organized crimes and environmental crimes taking place within their territory. This can be achieved by reinforcing and enhancing the analysis and information capacity of all Member States by imposing deadlines for governments to report such information via their government website. This initiative may further prove effective especially where these crimes take place more often and extensively in order to ensure that action can be taken against the perpetrators. This way, patterns can be more easily identifiable, and thus, more violations may be found. This will ensure security, stability, and peace to the Member States.

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