

QTMUN 2024

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# International Criminal Police Organization

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DIRECTOR

Mehek Berry

VICE DIRECTOR

Ceara Sweeney

MODERATOR

Sanjana Lakhpatwala

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## Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an equitable manner, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

**This Background Guide and INTERPOL presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to the following: themes of animal cruelty or animal death, potential violations of human rights, piracy, terrorism, violence, kidnapping and abduction, death or dying, blood, crime, firearms, money laundering, etc.**

UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: preparing yourself before reading this background guide, seeking support after reading the background guide, or filling out the committee switch form beforehand. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org). We want you to feel safe and comfortable.



If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please do the following:

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If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts, please do any of the following:

1. Email [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org) to reach Harvi Karatha or email [deputy.equity@utmun.org](mailto:deputy.equity@utmun.org) to reach Iva Zivaljevic or reach out to me at [INTERPOL@utmun.org](mailto:INTERPOL@utmun.org).
2. Fill out the (Anonymous if preferred) UTMUN Equity Contact Form: [UTMUN Equity Contact Form](#)
3. Notify/Ask any staff member to connect you to Harvi Karatha or [Iva Zivaljevic](#)



# Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to all attendees of UTMUN 2024 for the entire duration of the conference, and any conference-related activities (including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies).

1. Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,
  - a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect) discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;
    - i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;
    - ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;
  - b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harassment, such as, but not limited to,
    - i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;
    - ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;
    - iii. Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;
2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,
  - a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;
  - b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;
    - i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;
    - ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org) with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;



- c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;
- d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org);
- e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff, members;
  - i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,

- a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;
- b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;
- c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;
  - i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;
  - ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to impose restrictions on delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,

- a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;
- b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);
- c. Disqualification from awards;
- d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on UTMUN's policies regarding equity or conduct, please see this [form](#). For any questions/concerns, or any equity violations that any attendee(s) would like to raise, please contact UTMUN's Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at [equity@utmun.org](mailto:equity@utmun.org) or fill out this anonymous Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/Psc5Luxp22T3c9Zz8>.

## A Letter From Your Director:

Greetings delegates!

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) committee for UTMUN 2024. My name is Mehek Berry, and I am thoroughly excited to be your committee director during the upcoming conference. I am a third-year student at the University of Toronto, double majoring in Political Science and Criminology and Sociolegal Studies.

Joining me on the dais is Ceara Sweeney, the Vice Director of this committee. She is a first-year at the University of Toronto, and is planning on majoring in Political Science.

This year, the INTERPOL Committee will be discussing two diverse key issues: environmental crime and transnational crime at sea. As delegates, you should focus on debating optimal policing strategies to address each topic by examining your countries' police organizations and their approaches to each sub-topic. INTERPOL facilitates the organization of shared information and cooperation amongst member-states, thus, it is important for delegates to note that INTERPOL is an unbiased and neutral organization in the world of global politics.

This background guide is intended to be a useful starting point for your independent research, and we hope that it will aid you in the thoughtful discussions we will have as a committee during the conference. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the dais should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to welcoming you all at UTMUN 2024 and engaging in fruitful debate.

Good luck!



## Position Papers:

At UTMUN 2024, position papers are required to qualify for awards. Each committee will also give out one Best Position Paper award. Only delegates in Ad Hoc are exempt from submitting a position paper. To learn more about position paper writing, formatting and submission, please check out the position paper guidelines. Please read through the guidelines carefully as this page will describe content recommendations, formatting requirements and details on citations. If you have any questions about position paper writing, feel free to contact your Dais via your committee email or reach out to [academics@utmun.org](mailto:academics@utmun.org).

## Introduction:

INTERPOL is an intergovernmental organization (IGO) and global platform that coordinates policing efforts between domestic police organizations. The idea of a body addressing crimes at an international level was introduced at the first International Criminal Police Congress held in Monaco in April 1914, attended by representatives from 20 countries.<sup>1</sup> It was initially founded in 1923 following World War I as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), which aimed to provide mutual assistance between police in different countries.<sup>2</sup> In 1938, prior to the start of World War II, the Nazis took over the ICPC until 1946. The ICPC became the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL) by adopting a modernized constitution in 1956.<sup>3</sup> The organization attained autonomy by collecting dues from member nations and relying on financial investments. The organization now assists police in 195 member-states to deter crime by facilitating data sharing on crimes and criminals and offering technical and operational support, coordinating policing efforts transnationally.

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<sup>1</sup> “1923 – How Our History Started.” INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/INTERPOL-100/1923-how-our-history-started>.

<sup>2</sup> INTERPOL, “1923.”

<sup>3</sup> INTERPOL, “1923.”

While the General Secretariat coordinates INTERPOL's daily operations, it is led by the Secretary-General and staffed by police and civilians.<sup>4</sup> The organization's headquarters are in Lyon, France, and its global innovation center is in Singapore, with other satellite offices in various global locations. A National Central Bureau (NCB) of INTERPOL serves as the main point of contact for the General Secretariat and other NCBs in each nation.<sup>5</sup> The NCB is housed in the government ministry in charge of policing and managed by national police officials. The IGO's governing body is the General Assembly, which gathers all nations annually to make decisions.

This year, the INTERPOL committee will be discussing the topics of environmental crime and transnational crime at sea. The cross-border nature of these topics has repercussions for nations if they are unable to address them through unilateral efforts. Environmental crime impacts biodiversity and sustainable development, whilst transnational crime at sea impacts maritime trade, security, and stability across oceans. Delegates are urged to think about the collaborative methods nations could use to carry out their obligations, with an emphasis on multilateral response and prevention of criminal innovation.

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<sup>4</sup> "What Is Interpol?" INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/What-is-INTERPOL>.

<sup>5</sup> INTERPOL, "What Is Interpol?"

## Defintions:

### Transnational Crime

A crime committed that occurs across, through, or beyond international borders, which violate security and order.<sup>6</sup>

### Notice System

Notices are international requests for assistance or warnings enabling law enforcement in participating nations to exchange vital crime-related information. They are issued by the General Secretariat in response to a request from a member nation's NCB, and are available for all member nations to view on the Notices database.<sup>7</sup> There are seven types of notices employed by the organization.

#### Red Notice

Searching for and apprehending persons wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence.

#### Blue Notice

Collecting additional information regarding a person's identity, whereabouts, or activities related to a criminal inquiry.

#### Green Notice

Issuing warning against a person's criminal activity when that individual is thought to pose a risk to public safety.

#### Yellow Notice

Helping in the identification of those who are unable to self-identify or in the search for missing people, frequently kids.

#### Orange Notice

Warning regarding an event, a person, an item, or a procedure that poses a substantial and immediate risk to the public's safety.

### I-24/7 Database

A secure global police communications system that delivers criminal intelligence. It is an encrypted network that provides member states access to the criminal databases of other member policing authorities.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Transnational criminal law - Stanford Law School, n.d. <https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ILEI-Transnational-Crim-Law-2016.pdf>.

7. "About Notices." INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Notices/About-Notices>.

8. "Databases." INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/Databases>.



### Extradition

A formal procedure whereby one state hands over a person to another state so that they may be tried or punished for crimes committed within the jurisdiction of the requesting state. This is typically facilitated by a bilateral or multinational treaty.<sup>9</sup>

### Fugitive

An individual who is attempting to evade the law and justice. A person may become a fugitive for a number of reasons: they may have been accused of breaking the law but not detained; they may have been granted bail and subsequently fled to avoid being prosecuted; or they may have escaped from jail or prison.<sup>10</sup>

### Terrorism

Unlawful use of force and intimidation, particularly against civilians, to further political objectives. It encompasses a diverse range of threats such as organized terrorism in conflict zones, foreign terrorist fighters, radicalized ‘lone wolves’, and attacks using chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive materials.<sup>11</sup>

### Rule of Law

Principle of governance according to which all individuals, institutions, and organizations are answerable to laws that are publicly announced and are in compliance with norms and standards related to international human rights.<sup>12</sup> It recognizes that all persons are equal under the law, the transparency of law, independent judiciary, and accessible legal remedy.

### Intelligence Sharing

The exchange of intelligence data with various government and intergovernmental agencies or exchange with foreign governments. It enables more decision-makers to employ actionable intelligence.<sup>13</sup>

### Incidence Response Team (IRT)

A group of specialists sent out at the request of a member nation amid a crisis. There are two types of IRTs that are dispatched: disaster, which are unanticipated catastrophic events that require an immediate response, including major accidents or natural disasters, and crime, which involve the provision of expert professionals to help and aid a member nation dealing with a significant or serious police situation.<sup>14</sup>

9. “What Is Extradition?” Council on Foreign Relations, n.d. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-extradition>.

10. Fugitives - interpol, March 2018. [https://www.interpol.int/content/download/620/file/FIS-01\\_2018-03\\_EN\\_LR.pdf](https://www.interpol.int/content/download/620/file/FIS-01_2018-03_EN_LR.pdf).

11. “Terrorism.” INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism>.

12. “The Rule of Law.” LexisNexis, n.d. <https://www.lexisnexis.ca/en-ca/about-us/rule-of-law.page>.

13. Intelligence definition and meaning | Collins english dictionary, n.d. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/intelligence>.

14. “Interpol Response Teams.” INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/How-we-work/INTERPOL-response-teams#:~:text=An%20INTERPOL%20Incident%20Response%20Team,scale%20accidents%20or%20natural%20disasters>.

# Definitions Related to Topic 1: Environmental Crime

## Poaching

The illegal shooting, trapping, or killing of wildlife, including game, fish and plants.<sup>15</sup>

## Deforestation

The clearing or thinning of forested areas for human use. This process destroys habitats, biodiversity, and contributes to the global climate crisis.<sup>16</sup>

## E-Waste

Electronic waste that is generated by the mass production and disposal of electric and electronic equipment.<sup>17</sup>

## Pollution

The introduction of harmful chemicals and/or materials into the environment that damage the air, land, or water, and harm biodiversity. These materials can be naturally occurring, such as ash or soot, or created by human activity, such as factory runoff.<sup>18</sup>

## Climate Change

Long-term and harmful shifts in global temperatures and weather patterns. Though these shifts can be naturally occurring, since the 1800's human activity has been the root cause, largely due to the burning of fossil fuels that produce greenhouse gasses.<sup>19</sup>

## Carbon Footprint

The total amount of carbon emissions produced by the subject, including direct emissions (transportation, heating, etc.) and indirect emissions (the electricity required to produce the goods and services the subject consumes). A carbon footprint can be produced by an individual or an entity, like a corporation or country.<sup>20</sup>

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A collection of 17 goals set forward by the United Nations in 2015. These goals target a wide variety of sectors like climate change, poverty, healthcare, and are aimed at improving human health and quality of life globally by 2030.<sup>21</sup>

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15. "Poaching." Encyclopædia Britannica, August 17, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/poaching-law>.

16. "Deforestation." Encyclopædia Britannica, August 17, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/science/deforestation>.

17. "Electronic Waste." Encyclopædia Britannica, August 12, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/electronic-waste>.

18. "Pollution." National Geographic, n.d. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/pollution/>.

19. "What Is Climate Change?" United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>.

20. "Carbon Footprint." Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. <https://www.britannica.com/science/carbon-footprint>.

21. "Sustainable Development Goals." Education, n.d. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/sustainable-development-goals/>.

## Definitions Related to Topic 2: Transnational Crime at Sea

### Piracy

Robbery or violent actions committed at sea, outside the normal jurisdiction of any state.<sup>22</sup>

### Illegal Dumping

The disposal of waste in areas where it is unauthorized or illegal. This action can be performed on a small or large scale (an individual vs. a corporation).<sup>23</sup>

### Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated Fishing (IUU) Fishing

A term that encompasses three forms of unlawful fishing – illegal fishing, unreported fishing, and unregulated fishing.<sup>24</sup>

### Illegal Fishing

Fishing conducted in a State's water without permission from said State, or in direct violation of the State's laws and regulations.<sup>25</sup>

### Unreported Fishing

Fishing conducted in a State's water that has not been reported or misreported to State authorities.<sup>26</sup>

### Unregulated Fishing

Fishing conducted in areas where there are no conservation laws, but the fishing is conducted in such a manner that contradicts state conservation responsibilities as outlined by international law.<sup>27</sup>

### Human Trafficking by Sea

The act of transferring people between borders using threats, coercion, or violence for the purpose of exploitation. The victims are transported via ship, including fishing boats and ferries.<sup>28</sup>

### Blue Economy

The sustainable use of ocean resources to promote economic growth and improved livelihoods while preserving the health of marine life and ecosystems.<sup>29</sup>

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22. "Piracy." Encyclopædia Britannica, August 14, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/piracy-international-law>.

23. "Illegal Dumping." Illegal Dumping - Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, n.d. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DEP/contact/illegal-dumping.html>.

24. "Fao.Org." What is IUU fishing? | Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, n.d. <https://www.fao.org/iuu-fishing/background/what-is-iuu-fishing/en/>.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Cassar, Matthew. "Human Trafficking by Sea: A Threat to Maritime Security." L-Università ta' Malta, January 1, 1970.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/53727>.

29. "What Is the Blue Economy?" World Bank, n.d. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2017/06/06/blue-economy>.



## Abbreviations - Committee Related:

**NCB - National Central Bureau**

**IRT - Incident Response Team**

**GAFIS - Global Fingerprint and Criminal Identification System**

**I-Checkit - INTERPOL's secure travel document verification system**

**INTERPOL Foundation - The Foundation for a Safer World**

**PPE - Purple Notice**

(Seek or provide information on modi operandi, objects, devices, or concealment methods used by criminals)

## Abbreviations - Topic 1. Environmental Crime:

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

**UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme**

**CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity**

**IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**

**EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment**

**IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature**

**WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature**

**IWT - Illegal Wildlife Trade**

**ICCWC - International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime**

## Abbreviations - Topic 2. Transnational Crime at Sea:

**IUU Fishing - Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated Fishing**

**UNCLOS - United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea**

**EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zone**

**AIS - Automatic Identification System**

**SAR - Search and Rescue**

**PSC - Port State Control**

**IMB - International Maritime Bureau**

**GFCM - General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean**

**UNTOC - United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime**

**EEZ - Exclusive Economic Zones**



## Historical Background:

### Topic 1: Environmental Crime

Though the roots of climate change and environmental degradation can be traced back to the industrial revolution,<sup>30</sup> the issue only began receiving international recognition and cooperation in the last century.<sup>31</sup> Today, environmental abuse is ranked as the fourth largest criminal activity in the world, costing nearly 258 billion USD, and increasing by up to 8% each year.<sup>32</sup>

Adopted in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol is one of the most extensive international efforts of its time to address the climate crisis, explicitly targeted at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The treaty outlines specific emission reduction goals focused mainly on industrialized countries, as it recognizes developed nations' responsibility for the current level of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere.<sup>33</sup> The treaty also puts forth specific monitoring and accountability protocols, including a set of reporting guidelines and procedures to implement when countries are not in compliance with their commitments. These procedures are separated into two main components: the Compliance Committee and the Enforcement Branch. The Compliance Committee is responsible for monitoring and promoting nations' progress in reaching emission goals, while the Enforcement Branch deals with cases of non-compliance and takes appropriate actions.<sup>34</sup> There are currently 192 parties involved in the Kyoto Protocol.

In 2004, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) directive was introduced to the European Union. Under this directive, all major building and development projects in the EU must assess their environmental impact before construction is approved.<sup>35</sup> This includes projects like nuclear power stations, motorways, railways, and hazardous waste disposal sites. The impact is assessed based on a variety of factors, including population and human health, biodiversity, land, climate, and cultural heritage. The directive's goal is to prioritize transparency and environmental protection.<sup>36</sup>

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30. "Causes of Climate Change." AdaptNSW, n.d. <https://www.climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/causes-climate-change#:~:text=N2O>.

31. Pester, Patrick. "When Did Scientists First Warn Humanity about Climate Change?" LiveScience, December 12, 2021. <https://www.livescience.com/humans-first-warned-about-climate-change>.

32. "Environmental Crime." UNEP, n.d. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/environmental-crime>.

33. "Kyoto Protocol." Unfccc.int, n.d. [https://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol](https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol).

34. "Kyoto Protocol Mechanisms." Unfccc.int, n.d. <https://unfccc.int/topics/compliance-and-implementation/kyoto-protocol-compliance-mechanism>.

35. "Environmental Impact Assessment." Environment, n.d. [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-assessments/environmental-impact-assessment\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-assessments/environmental-impact-assessment_en).

36. "Environmental Impact Assessment." Environment

The International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime was established in 2012 by five intergovernmental organizations: INTERPOL, CITES, UNODC, and the World Customs Organization.<sup>37</sup> The ICCWC uses frontline officers responsible for wildlife law enforcement and aids authorities in bringing wildlife criminals to justice. Their mission is to strengthen criminal justice systems, and provide support at national and international levels to target wildlife crime.<sup>38</sup>

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 17 goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>39</sup> These goals encompass many sectors and disciplines, several of which directly address the climate and environmental crisis. These goals provide a global framework for environmental protection and sustainable development.<sup>40</sup> Goal 15, specifically, aims to promote the sustainable use of ecosystems, combat desertification, and combat loss of biodiversity.<sup>41</sup>

The Paris Agreement was adopted by 196 countries at the UN climate change conference in 2015, and was set in force in 2016. The agreement intends to limit global temperature increase by 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It works in a five-year cycle, in which each nation submits its climate action plans, each one more ambitious than the last.<sup>42</sup>

And finally, in 2022, the EU announced a new action plan to fight against wildlife trafficking. The plan aspires to tighten regulations surrounding wildlife, with a specific focus on the growing problem of online wildlife trafficking.<sup>43</sup> Measures include strengthening law enforcement, enhancing international cooperation, raising public awareness, and promoting sustainable practices. The plan calls for governments to establish stronger partnerships with NGOs, international organizations, and private sectors.<sup>44</sup>

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37. "ICCWC - International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime." CITES, n.d. [https://cites.org/eng/prog/iccwc#:~:text=What%20is%20ICCWC%3F,World%20Customs%20Organization%20\(WCO\).](https://cites.org/eng/prog/iccwc#:~:text=What%20is%20ICCWC%3F,World%20Customs%20Organization%20(WCO).)

38. Ibid.

39. Environment, UN. "Sustainable Development Goals." UNEP, n.d. <https://www.unep.org/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/sustainable-development-goals>.

40. Environment, UN. "Sustainable Development Goals."

41. Single-use plastics - united nations environment programme, n.d. [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic\\_sustainability.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic_sustainability.pdf).

42. "The Paris Agreement." Unfccc.int, n.d. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement#:~:text=It%20entered%20into%20force%20on,above%20pre%2Dindustrial%20levels.%E2%80%9D>.

43. "Press Corner." European Commission - European Commission, n.d. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA\\_22\\_6581](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_22_6581).

44. "Press Corner." European Commission

## Topic 2: Transnational Crime at Sea

One of the most ground-breaking efforts in maritime security was the adoption of the Law of the Sea Convention in 1982. The convention established a legal framework for using and protecting the oceans, seabeds, and their resources. It created freedom of navigation rights, set territorial sea boundaries 12 miles offshore, created the International Seabed Authority, and created conflict resolution mechanisms to address any maritime disputes between nations.<sup>45</sup>

In 2000, the UN adopted UNTOC, or the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, a multilateral treaty widely known as the main legal tool to fight transnational crime. Within the treaty, the Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air was included, a protocol intended to target the organized smuggling and trafficking of migrants.<sup>46</sup> Covering illegal migration via land, sea and air, the protocol's goal is not to criminalize illegal migrants for being the object of smuggling, but instead aims to prevent illegal migration and punish organized crime groups that abuse and profit off migrants.<sup>47</sup> However, some organizations have raised concerns that the protocol may impact asylum seekers and refugees, and have advocated for amendments to be made that protect these vulnerable groups.<sup>48</sup>

In 2010, piracy in Somalia was at its peak. Concerns were growing that with their limited resources and judicial capacity, the pirates would further harm vessels in and around Somalian waters, hindering international shipping and trade.<sup>49</sup> The UN Security Council (UNSC) introduced Resolution 1918, which directly calls on states to prosecute those responsible for piracy attacks, as well as criminalize piracy under their own domestic law. This was an important internationally coordinated step in targeting marine crime.<sup>50</sup>

In 2014, states adopted the Cape Town Agreement on the Implementation of Provisions of the Torremolinos Protocol, more commonly known as “The Cape Town Agreement”.<sup>51</sup> The purpose of the agreement is to improve the safety and working conditions of commercial fishing vessels, providing standards for the design, construction, and equipment aboard the ships. The agreement, which details specific safety regulations for workers, helps protect the overall well-being of fishermen and enhances the safety of fishing operations.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>. “Oceans and the Law of the Sea.” United Nations, n.d. [https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/oceans-and-the-law-of-the-sea#:~:text=United%20Nations%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea%20Convention%20\(UNCLOS\)&text=The%20convention%20has%20resolved%20several.up%20to%20200%20miles%20offshore.](https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/oceans-and-the-law-of-the-sea#:~:text=United%20Nations%20Law%20of%20the%20Sea%20Convention%20(UNCLOS)&text=The%20convention%20has%20resolved%20several.up%20to%20200%20miles%20offshore.)

<sup>46</sup>. UNAFEI, n.d. [https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS\\_No62/No62\\_07VE\\_Ollus2.pdf](https://www.unafei.or.jp/publications/pdf/RS_No62/No62_07VE_Ollus2.pdf)

<sup>47</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>. “UNHCR Summary Position on the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.” UNHCR, n.d. <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/unhcr-summary-position-protocol-against-smuggling-migrants-land-sea-and-air-and.>

<sup>49</sup>. “UNSCR Search Engine for the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.” UNSCR, n.d. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1918.>

<sup>50</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>. The Pew Charitable Trusts. “The Cape Town Agreement Explained.” The Pew Charitable Trusts, September 24, 2019. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2018/10/the-cape-town-agreement-explained#:~:text=The%20CTA%20updates%2C%20amends%2C%20and,are%20reflected%20by%20the%20CTA.>

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid.

## Topic 1: Environmental Crime

Environmental crimes are unlawful acts that have a direct negative impact on the environment. These may encompass “illegal trade in wildlife; smuggling of ozone-depleting substances (ODS); illicit trade in hazardous waste; illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing; and illegal logging and the associated trade in stolen timber.”<sup>53</sup> However, as these illicit acts are labeled as victimless crimes, nations loiter behind in their response despite the severe consequences on natural ecosystems and communities.

In our globalizing world, environmental crimes have an aggravated effect on nations. The threat to biodiversity from such crimes has led to the extinction of a myriad of species of flora and fauna.<sup>54</sup> The lack of restrictions on unlawful environmental acts harms human health, as crimes such as unlawful hazardous waste disposal and water pollution can potentially lead to death.<sup>55</sup> The disruption to ecology has led to soil deterioration and water pollution, which deteriorates the quality of livelihood for communities relying on such resources. Moreover, the depletion of natural resources through illegal logging and burning of fossil fuels accelerates climate change by exacerbating extreme weather conditions, accelerating sea level rise, and endangering weaker habitats and communities, among other catastrophic environmental events.<sup>56</sup> This overconsumption leads to transnational impacts, including rising economic costs for countries as environmental crime is linked to three of the top twelve most lucrative transnational criminal operations, with an estimated revenue between \$70 to \$213 billion USD annually.<sup>57</sup> Governments can lose substantial revenue as a result of environmental crimes, while communities face the burden of restoration and mitigating environmental damage.

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53. Banks, Debbie, Charlotte Davies, Justin Gosling, Julian Newman, Mary Rice, Jago Wadley, and Fionnuala Waravens. “Environmental Crime - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.” Environmental Investigation Agency, October 2008. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/EIA\\_Ecocrime\\_report\\_0908\\_final\\_draft\\_low.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/EIA_Ecocrime_report_0908_final_draft_low.pdf).

54. “Environmental Crime.” Europol, n.d. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-statistics/crime-areas/environmental-crime>.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.



## Subtopic 1: Illegal Wildlife Trade

As a multi-billion dollar global industry, the illegal wildlife trade is seen by many as a low-risk and high-reward criminal activity.<sup>58</sup> Wildlife can be defined as all fauna, which encompasses animals and birds, and flora, which comprises plants. Illegal wildlife trade is a form of environmental crime that involves activities that violate the country's rules and regulations intended to safeguard natural resources and oversee their management and usage.<sup>59</sup> Although there is no universally accepted definition of the term, as different jurisdictions utilize different terminology, illegal wildlife trade usually involves the poaching, smuggling, and capturing of protected species, their derivatives, or their products.<sup>60</sup> This prolific form of environmental crime is a threat to wildlife and ecological systems, poses significant risk to human health, and can further finance other criminal activities.

### Previous UN Action:

**CITES** — CITES is an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not impact species, especially those of endangered status that face high levels of exploitation.<sup>61</sup> Though CITES is legally binding, it does not replace national laws. CITES controls international trade in specimens of selected species through a licensing system. Each Party to the Convention designates one or more Management Authorities to implement the licensing system. The species protected by CITES are listed in three appendixes.<sup>62</sup>

**Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime** — Organized by UNODC, the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime addresses the growing issue of illegal wildlife trade to help nations strengthen legislation and improve coordination amongst law enforcement agencies.<sup>63</sup> The programme is working to prevent and deter crimes that affect the environment by strengthening national legal frameworks, enhancing national capacities for investigation, prosecution, and adjudication, and addressing corruption risks linked to crimes that affect the environment. Recently, The UNODC Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime has expanded to address crimes in the fisheries sector, illegal mining, and trafficking in precious metals and waste and has launched the Safety Across Asia For the global Environment project.<sup>64</sup>

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58. Government of Canada, Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada. "Government of Canada." Operational alert: Laundering the proceeds of crime from illegal wildlife trade, January 31, 2023. [https://fintrac-canafe.canada.ca/intel/operation/oai-wildlife-eng\\_](https://fintrac-canafe.canada.ca/intel/operation/oai-wildlife-eng_)

59. "ILLEGAL LOGGING, FISHING, AND WILDLIFE TRADE: THE COSTS AND HOW TO COMBAT IT." World Bank, October 2019. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/482771571323560234-0120022019/original/WBGRreport1017Digital.pdf>

60. Kkienem. "Wildlife, Forest & Fisheries Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Criminalization of Wildlife Trafficking." Wildlife, Forest & Fisheries Crime Module 3 Key Issues: Criminalization of Wildlife Trafficking, n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/wildlife-crime/module-3/key-issues/criminalization-of-wildlife-trafficking.html>

61. "What Is CITES?" CITES, n.d. <https://cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

62. Ibid.

63. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Annual\\_Report\\_GPWLFC2021.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/Wildlife/Annual_Report_GPWLFC2021.pdf)

64. Ibid.

**ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network** — The ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network is an integrated system of law enforcement agencies, and members include officials from the CITES authorities, customs, the police, prosecutors, wildlife-law enforcement agencies, and other relevant agencies.<sup>65</sup> In order to combat illicit harvesting of wild fauna and flora and transnational trade, the network provides a mechanism for effective coordination and sharing of information among law enforcement agencies. ASEAN-WEN enforces the CITES agreement as well as combats transnational wildlife crime in the ASEAN regions.<sup>66</sup>

**IWT Challenge Fund** — The Illegal Wildlife Challenge Fund is a UK government grant program that provides funding to projects around the globe that combat illegal wildlife trade.<sup>67</sup> The fund looks for projects that reduce the demand for illegally traded wildlife products, strengthen law enforcement, and directly improve the livelihood of those impacted by illegal wildlife trade. The fund brings together governments, NGOs, and businesses committed to eradicating illegal wildlife trade.<sup>68</sup>

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65. “ASEAN Launches the ASEAN Wildlife Law Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN).” CITES, n.d. <https://cites.org/eng/news/sundry/2005/ASEAN-WEN.shtml>.

66. Ibid.

67. “Angola.” darwin initiative, n.d. <https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/>.

68. Ibid.

## Current Issues

One of the primary concerns linked to illegal wildlife trade is the potential for increased spread of zoonotic diseases. Zoonoses is an infectious disease that has jumped from animal to human, and can be spread through direct contact, food, water, or the environment, conditions which illegal wildlife trade can exacerbate.<sup>69</sup> Zoonoses comprise a large part of new and existing diseases in humans, such as HIV, rabies, and Ebola.<sup>70</sup> Illegal wildlife trade in areas with dense human populations poses a high risk for the uncontrollable spread of disease. One of the most prominent examples, the COVID-19 pandemic, has been linked to the illegal trade of animals, and has caused incomparable socioeconomic damage coupled with nearly 5 million deaths worldwide. The virus, which has genetic links to SARS-CoV-2, was theorized to have passed from bats to humans through an intermediate host, later identified as the Malayan pangolin.<sup>71</sup> The commercial trade of pangolins has been illegal since the 2000's, with all species of the animal being CITES listed. Thus, the pangolins linked to the pandemic were illegally trafficked. With the appearance of seven new strains of Coronavirus in the past 50 years, the likelihood of future zoonotic epidemics is high. Combating illegal wildlife trade limits the risk of zoonotic diseases passing on to humans.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, illegal wildlife trade has adverse ecological impacts. Trafficking significantly affects the population of species, as well as creating sex-ratio imbalances that hinder reproduction rates, reducing population even further.<sup>73</sup> The problem increases when keystone species are affected, as such species are central to and have a direct impact on their ecosystems, which can lead to further ecological decline. Conversely, illegal trade can introduce harmful foreign species into an environment, which compete with native species for limited resources, and alter habitats.<sup>74</sup>

The illegal wildlife trade industry is a major international sector of crime, generating an estimated 20 billion USD each year.<sup>75</sup> As such, illegal wildlife trade heavily intersects with other areas of international and domestic crime, such as drug, arms, and human trafficking.<sup>76</sup> In fact, many individuals identified as potential wildlife traffickers in suspicious transactions reports were involved or suspected to be involved in other criminal activities, or were members of known criminal groups. This indicates that many crime organizations utilize wildlife trafficking to raise profits and power, likely using those funds to finance other criminal activities.<sup>77</sup> As well, illegal wildlife trade is directly linked to a plethora of forms of fraud, money laundering, tax evasion, and other crimes to facilitate the trade of wildlife.<sup>78</sup>

69. "Zoonoses." World Health Organization, n.d. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zoonoses#:~:text=A%20zoonosis%20is%20an%20infectious,food%2C%20water%20or%20the%20environment.>

70. Ibid.

71. Doody, J. Sean, Joan A. Reid, Klejdis Bilali, Jennifer Diaz, and Nichole Mattheus. "In the Post-Covid-19 Era, Is the Illegal Wildlife Trade the Most Serious Form of Trafficking? - Crime Science." BioMed Central, September 13, 2021. <https://crimesciencejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40163-021-00154-9#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20while%20zoonosis%20related%20to,in%20SARS%2DCoV%2D2.>

72. Ibid.

73. Kkienerm. "Wildlife, Forest & Fisheries Crime Module 1 Key Issues: Implications of Wildlife Trafficking." Wildlife, Forest & Fisheries Crime Module 1 Key Issues: Implications of Wildlife Trafficking, n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/wildlife-crime/module-1/key-issues/implications-of-wildlife-trafficking.html#:~:text=It%20can%20threaten%20ecosystem%20functions,reproduction%20rate%20of%20vulnerable%20species.>

74. Ibid.

75. Government of Canada, Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada. "Government of Canada." Operational alert: Laundering the proceeds of crime from illegal wildlife trade, January 31, 2023. [https://fintrac-canafe.canada.ca/intel/operation/oai-wildlife-eng\\_](https://fintrac-canafe.canada.ca/intel/operation/oai-wildlife-eng_)

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

Wildlife trade also disproportionately affects vulnerable communities like Indigenous peoples and those in poverty.<sup>79</sup> Though Indigenous peoples are heavily impacted by the loss of economic assets and resources that illegal wildlife trade causes, they are often excluded from the benefits of conservation. In many struggling communities, wildlife trafficking is an important source of income, and smugglers and poachers exploit this vulnerability to further their own gains.<sup>80</sup> In Brazil, native bird species are purchased from Indigenous communities for as little as 1 USD, and resold for up to 1000 USD.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Indigenous peoples are highly sought after for their knowledge of the land and wildlife, with many organized crime groups recruiting young people from these communities to aid in trafficking and smuggling.<sup>82</sup> At the same time, Indigenous groups are negatively impacted by the intense enforcement action taken against perpetrators of wildlife crime. Little distinction is made between those who traffic wildlife for large-scale profits and those who traffick wildlife out of necessity, driven by poverty.<sup>83</sup>

## Case Studies:

### *Ivory Trade and Elephant Poaching*

African elephants are heavily targeted by poachers and smugglers for their coveted ivory tusks, a material that has historically been highly valued, especially on black markets.<sup>84</sup> Each year, nearly 200,000 African elephants are killed for their tusks, and as a result are identified as a critically endangered species.<sup>85</sup> However, despite greatly reducing the overall population, researchers at Colorado State University and Save the Elephants found that poaching has longer-term effects on elephant populations than originally thought.<sup>86</sup> The research suggests that juvenile elephants orphaned as a result of poaching have a decreased chance of survival in a herd, and the increased loss of younger elephants may be detrimental to the overall population. Even orphaned juvenile elephants that were relatively independent of their mothers, and no longer relied on their milk, had a lesser chance of survival than their peers.<sup>87</sup> Because elephants are a social mammal, poaching just one elephant affects the entire herd. Killing one elephant has downstream effects on other elephants that are bonded to it.<sup>88</sup>

79. "The Role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade." Wildlife Trade News from TRAFFIC, n.d. <https://www.traffic.org/news/the-role-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-in-combating-illegal-wildlife-trade/>.

80. Aguirre, A., J. Anderson, M. Bezerra-Santos, D. Giovanini, and C. Hagenbeck. "Wildlife Trafficking via Social Media in Brazil." Biological Conservation, December 4, 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0006320721004729>.

81. Uhm, Daan P. van, and Ana G. Grigore. "Indigenous People, Organized Crime and Natural Resources: Borders, Incentives and Relations - Critical Criminology." SpringerLink, August 10, 2021. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10612-021-09585-x>.

82. Ibid.

83. "The Role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade." Wildlife Trade News from TRAFFIC, n.d. <https://www.traffic.org/news/the-role-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-in-combating-illegal-wildlife-trade/>.

84. Barker, Lindy. "14 Things You Didn't Know about Today's Ivory Trade." WildAid, January 13, 2023. <https://wildaid.org/14-things-you-didnt-know-about-todays-ivory-trade/>.

85. "Stopping Elephant Ivory Demand." WWF, n.d. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/initiatives/stopping-ivory-demand>.

86. Wynyard, Jane. "Studying Longer-Term Effects on Elephants from Poaching." Phys.org, September 17, 2021. <https://phys.org/news/2021-09-longer-term-effects-elephants-poaching.html>.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

### *Tiger Trafficking*

Tiger trafficking is a popular sector of the illegal wildlife trade industry, with the total number of parts seized between 2000 and 2015 equating to an estimated 1755 tigers. With only 3900 tigers left in the wild, tiger trafficking has shown no signs of slowing down.<sup>89</sup> But the majority of tigers on the black market are not a result of wild tiger poaching, instead coming from captive breeding facilities, tiger breeding farms that are often unregulated and legal.<sup>90</sup> These facilities are not only a danger to the animals' health, but also put wild tigers at risk. The presence of tiger parts, like fangs, on the black market legitimizes and increases demand for the products.<sup>91</sup> This creates an incentive for poachers to target the already dwindling wild tiger populations. Studies have found that Southeast Asian countries that allow tiger breeding farms are seeing the greatest decline in wild tiger populations, with the species now classified as functionally extinct in Lao PDR and Vietnam.<sup>92</sup> Tigers are apex predators, and play an important role in balancing the food chain in their environments. The absence or extinction of the tiger population will have harmful impacts on a variety of ecosystems.<sup>93</sup>

## **Subtopic 2: Illegal Logging and Deforestation and its Impacts**

Illegal logging and deforestation refer to the illegal act of taking down trees, moving them, or using their products for financial advantage. This form of environmental crime is disastrous especially when the extraction of resources including timber occurs in protected areas such as national parks and indigenous land (10).<sup>94</sup> Such activities include the unauthorized removal of trees from forests that is frequently motivated by selfish interests or poor governance. These environmental crimes intersect with broader issues of organized crime, sustainability, and corruption. INTERPOL assists in reducing the negative effects of illegal logging and deforestation on the environment, society, and economy by coordinating law enforcement activities and fostering cooperation.<sup>95</sup> Through its programs, criminal networks are dismantled, sustainable forestry practices are promoted, and the illegal timber trade is combated.

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89. "Increasing Number of Tiger Farms Implicated in Illegal Wildlife Trade." WWF, n.d.

[https://tigers.panda.org/news\\_and\\_stories/stories/increasing\\_number\\_of\\_tiger\\_farms\\_implicated\\_in\\_illegal\\_wildlife\\_trade/](https://tigers.panda.org/news_and_stories/stories/increasing_number_of_tiger_farms_implicated_in_illegal_wildlife_trade/).

90. "Tiger Trafficking Is Still a Major Threat to the Survival of World's Tigers." WWF, September 5, 2019.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/tiger-trafficking-is-still-a-major-threat-to-the-survival-of-world-s-tigers>.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. "Increasing Number of Tiger Farms Implicated in Illegal Wildlife Trade." WWF, n.d.

[https://tigers.panda.org/news\\_and\\_stories/stories/increasing\\_number\\_of\\_tiger\\_farms\\_implicated\\_in\\_illegal\\_wildlife\\_trade/](https://tigers.panda.org/news_and_stories/stories/increasing_number_of_tiger_farms_implicated_in_illegal_wildlife_trade/).

94. "ILLEGAL LOGGING, FISHING, AND WILDLIFE TRADE: THE COSTS AND HOW TO COMBAT IT." World Bank, October 2019. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/482771571323560234-0120022019/original/WBGRreport1017Digital.pdf>.

95. "What Is Interpol?" INTERPOL, n.d. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Who-we-are/What-is-INTERPOL>.



## Previous UN Action:

**United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030** — The UN General Assembly adopted the Strategic Plan for Forests in 2017, setting six Global Forest Goals and 26 associated targets to be achieved by 2030.<sup>96</sup> This voluntary and universal plan aims to promote the conservation, sustainable use, and development of forests. Among these goals includes a target to increase forest area by 3% worldwide, which is an increase of 120 million hectares.<sup>97</sup> By underscoring the importance of preventing illicit logging and deforestation, whilst advancing the notion of sustainable forest management, the plan ensures the health of forests, the well-being of communities, and the mitigation of climate change. It further promotes collaborative governance by urging for the mobilization of financial resources and reversal of forest cover loss.<sup>98</sup>

**Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)** — The CPF is a voluntary coalition of 16 international organizations, institutions, and secretariats, including the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).<sup>99</sup> This voluntary interagency partnership on forests is based on resolution 2000/35 by ECOSOC and UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), which aims to promote the sustainable management of all forms of forests and trees outside of forests.<sup>100</sup> The alliance is committed to increase contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global development goals as members work together to organize and streamline their tasks. They come up with strategies to enhance forest management, conservation, production, and commerce, and are developing solid strategic alliances with one another, leveraging their complementary skills and resources.<sup>101</sup>

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96. “United Nations Forum on Forests “ Un Strategic Plan for Forests.” United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/esa/forests/documents/un-strategic-plan-for-forests-2030/index.html>.

97. “ILLEGAL LOGGING, FISHING, AND WILDLIFE TRADE: THE COSTS AND HOW TO COMBAT IT.” World Bank, October 2019. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/482771571323560234-0120022019/original/WBGRReport1017Digital.pdf>.

98. Ibid.

99. “Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF Forests).” CPF, n.d. <https://www.fao.org/collaborative-partnership-on-forests/about/en>.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

**UN Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+)** — The ‘REDD+’ framework is a UN-led initiative that addresses the dual challenges of deforestation and forest degradation while promoting sustainable forest management to protect forests as part of the Paris Agreement.<sup>102</sup> By encouraging nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions through forest preservation, restoration, and sustainable land-use practices, REDD+ seeks to prevent climate change. It highlights how important trees are for storing carbon, protecting biodiversity, and assisting local economies.<sup>103</sup> It allows developing countries to receive results-based payments for emission reductions when they reduce deforestation, an incentive for their efforts.<sup>104</sup> Due to its emphasis on forest preservation and sustainable land-use practices, the framework addresses drivers of illegal logging and deforestation – including weak governance, lack of law enforcement, and economic incentives for destructive activities.

## Current Issues

As forests cover 31% of the planet, the loss of plant and animal species that are essential to the biodiversity of the forest is frequently brought on by illegal logging and deforestation, which destroy a variety of ecosystems.<sup>105</sup> The delicate ecosystemic balance is threatened by this loss, which also interferes with natural interactions as fauna become more accessible for hunters and poachers. Habitat destruction and fragmentation can endanger a plethora of species that depend on forests for their survival, as even localized destruction can cause extinctions of unique species located in isolated locations across the world.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, forests serve as a carbon sink and are essential for preventing climate change as they absorb carbon dioxide that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere and contribute to a continuing change in weather patterns.<sup>107</sup> The release of all the carbon stored contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbates climate change. Illegal logging and deforestation can create a feedback loop contributing to climate change. With temperatures rising, forest ecosystems are more susceptible to problems like pests, illnesses, and wildfires. These disruptions cause forests to deteriorate even more, releasing more carbon into the atmosphere and lowering the planet’s ability to slow global warming.<sup>108</sup>

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102. “What Is REDD+?” UNFCCC, n.d. <https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/redd/what-is-redd#:~:text=Forests%20absorb%20vast%20amounts%20of,forest%20degradation%20in%20developing%20countries>.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. “Deforestation and Forest Degradation.” WWF, n.d. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/deforestation-and-forest-degradation>.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid.

108. Melillo, Jerry. “Forests and Climate Change.” MIT Climate Portal, n.d. <https://climate.mit.edu/explainers/forests-and-climate-change>.

Soil erosion leads to reduced soil fertility, which destroys the top, nutrient-rich layer of soil. This has a detrimental effect on plant growth, particularly that of crops, which rely on nutrient-rich soil for their highest levels of output.<sup>109</sup> This leaves the soil exposed to wind and rain leading to decreased agricultural productivity.<sup>110</sup>

Another concern pertaining to illegal logging and deforestation is the impact deforestation has on local communities as it encroaches on their land and resources which may escalate to conflicts and riots. Conflicts over territory, access to water, and other important resources may occur when more people compete for limited land and resources.<sup>111</sup> This is of particular concern for marginalized and vulnerable groups relying on forest resources like fertile soil for farming and clean water for drinking.<sup>112</sup> Indigenous communities have established treaties and customary land rights that give them possession and management of particular regions. They become increasingly vulnerable to having their rights violated, traditional ways of life disrupted, and treaty pledges ignored when people encroach on these territories.<sup>113</sup>

The global economic impact of such environmental crimes disrupts forest-based industries, including timber and paper, international trade, and market dynamics. It can lead to trade imbalances with illegal timber and wood products being exported and sold in international markets, negatively impacting both exporting and importing countries.<sup>114</sup> According to the UNDP, by 2030, it is projected that the loss of wild pollinators, marine fisheries, and tropical forest timber will have reduced the global GDP by an average of \$2.7 trillion yearly.<sup>115</sup> This economic fallout may lead to unemployment, especially in legal forest-based industries which can adversely impact communities that depend on such sectors for their livelihoods.

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<sup>109</sup>. “What Is Erosion? Effects of Soil Erosion and Land Degradation.” WWF, n.d. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/soil-erosion-and-degradation>.

<sup>110</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>. Braga, Christian. “Effects of Deforestation on Humans and the Environment.” Thehumaneleague.org, September 21, 2021. <https://thehumaneleague.org/article/effects-of-deforestation>.

<sup>112</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>. Paxton, Midori. “The Destruction of Nature Threatens the World Economy. It’s Time to Outlaw It as a Serious Financial Crime: United Nations Development Programme.” UNDP, April 24, 2023. <https://www.undp.org/blog/destruction-nature-threatens-world-economy-its-time-outlaw-it-serious-financial-crime#:~:text=The%20impact%20of%20losing%20wild,%242.7%20trillion%20annually%20by%202030>.

<sup>115</sup>. Ibid.

## Case Studies:

### *Amazon Rainforest Deforestation*

The Amazon rainforest is in a severe environmental and climate crisis as it is confronted by issues ranging from deforestation to legislative changes in Brazil. The history of land colonization in the region resulted in extensive deforestation to develop the land for agricultural reasons.<sup>116</sup> Whilst the forest now faces unprecedented challenges with an increased demand for beef, the nation's environmental regulations remain lenient – enabling deforestation and misuse of the tropical forest.<sup>117</sup> With former President Jair Bolsonaro leading the state from 2019 to 2022 and favoring the exploitation of the Amazon, the rate of deforestation surged to about 92% within his first year of presidency. The sovereignty Brazil has over the resources of the Amazon is a contentious topic of global debate as the government has left indigenous tribes, such as the Karipuna, vulnerable to threats from land invaders, illegal loggers, and other conflict over their access to land and resources.<sup>118</sup>

### *Rosewood Trafficking*

Rosewood is an exotic and highly valuable timber, utilized in creating luxury furniture and musical instruments. Its aesthetic qualities and cultural significance make it a product of high demand – especially in China.<sup>119</sup> Organized criminal networks frequently support the illicit logging and trade of rosewood, which has disastrous environmental effects in places like Madagascar where the rosewood trade has grown to be a significant environmental problem.<sup>120</sup> The financial incentives provided to loggers and traffickers fuel the illegal rosewood trade despite the ecological impact of deforestation, habitat destruction, and endangerment to biodiversity.<sup>121</sup> The difficulties in enforcing laws and preventing illegal commerce and logging make it challenging to oversee vast and remote forest areas, enabling corruption which can encourage further criminal activity. Rosewood and other endangered tree species require sustainable forestry methods and conservation initiatives to ensure their protection.<sup>122</sup>

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116. Sandy, Matt. "Why Is the Amazon Rain Forest Disappearing?" Time, 2019. <https://time.com/amazon-rainforest-disappearing/>.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

119. Ong, Sandy, and Edward Carver. "The Rosewood Trade: An Illicit Trail from Forest to Furniture." Yale E360, January 29, 2019. <https://e360.yale.edu/features/the-rosewood-trade-the-illicit-trail-from-forest-to-furniture>.

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

122. Ibid.

### *Illegal Timber Trade in Southeast Asia*

Illegal timber trade is a severe global issue with environmental, economic, and social consequences. In Southeast Asia, the involvement of organized crime groups exploiting weak governance structures allows such groups to undermine trade routes, destabilizing regions and perpetuating corruption.<sup>123</sup> The region, spanning from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam to Laos among others, is home to tropical forests that are valued for their timber resources. The illegal timber traffic in the Asia-Pacific region is approximately worth US\$11 billion annually, equivalent to almost 30% of all regional trade in wood products.<sup>124</sup> Challenges to combating this form of environmental crime include corruption and the complexity of global supply chains. The demand for cheap wood products, weak law enforcement, and insufficient forest governance enable illegal timber trade at such a large scale. The devastating environmental consequences of illegal timber logging disrupts delicate ecosystems and contributes to the aggravation of the climate crises through increased carbon emissions.<sup>125</sup>

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123. Hunter, Marcena. "Tainted Timber: Illegal Logging, South East Asia." Global Initiative, April 25, 2018. [https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/tainted\\_timber/#:~:text=The%20illegal%20timber%20trade%20in,regional%20trade%20in%20wood%20p,roducts.](https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/tainted_timber/#:~:text=The%20illegal%20timber%20trade%20in,regional%20trade%20in%20wood%20p,roducts.)

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.



### Subtopic 3: Marine Pollution

Marine pollution consists of chemicals and waste from land or is washed or blown into the ocean that impedes the ecology, health of marine life, and global economic institutions. This type of pollution can include hazardous waste, plastic dumped in the ocean, and oil spills.<sup>126</sup> The health and sustainability of marine ecosystems, the protection of human health, and the development of a strong and vibrant blue economy all depend on a globally coordinated effort to address the contamination of marine environments.<sup>127</sup>

#### Previous UN Action:

**MARPOL (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships)** — MARPOL is the main legal framework that addresses the pollution of marine environments from vessels as a result of operational or accidental causes.<sup>128</sup> The convention is divided into six annexes, each laying out guidelines and regulations to limit ocean pollutants, including chemicals, sewage, oil, packaging and garbage. Many protocols in the convention were in response to a series of tanker accidents from 1976-1977.<sup>129</sup>

**UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 - Life Below Water** — Goal 14 is one of the 30 Sustainable Development Goals put forth by the UN in 2015. Goal 14, titled “Life Below Water,” aims to protect and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources.<sup>130</sup> Targets include preventing and significantly reducing all forms of marine pollution by 2025, minimizing the effects of ocean acidification, and increasing the economic benefits of developing countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, such as fisheries, aquaculture and tourism by 2030.<sup>131</sup>

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126. “Marine Pollution.” *Education*, n.d. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/marine-pollution/>.

127. “The Role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade.” *Wildlife Trade News* from TRAFFIC, n.d. <https://www.traffic.org/news/the-role-of-indigenous-peoples-and-local-communities-in-combating-illegal-wildlife-trade/>.

128. “International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution From Ships (MARPOL).” *International Maritime Organization*, n.d. [https://www.imo.org/en/about/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-\(MARPOL\).aspx#:~:text=The%20International%20Convention%20for%20the,2%20November%201973%20at%20IMO.](https://www.imo.org/en/about/Conventions/Pages/International-Convention-for-the-Prevention-of-Pollution-from-Ships-(MARPOL).aspx#:~:text=The%20International%20Convention%20for%20the,2%20November%201973%20at%20IMO.)

129. *Ibid.*

130. “Oceans - United Nations Sustainable Development.” *United Nations*, n.d. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>.

131. *Ibid.*

**UNEP Regional Seas Programme** — Established in 1974, the UNEP Regional Seas Programme is an action-oriented programme that brings together stakeholders including governments, scientific communities and civil societies. It is a regional mechanism for conservation of the marine and coastal environment.<sup>132</sup> Within the programme are Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs), which are inter-governmental frameworks to address the degradation of the oceans and seas at a regional level. RSCAPs focus on disaster reduction, climate change adaptation, and sustainable consumption.<sup>133</sup>

## Current Issues

With an estimated 10 billion tons of plastic floating in the North Pacific, marine pollution is an ever-growing threat to marine life and habitats. The accumulation of plastics in the ocean is directly responsible for the death or injury of many marine species.<sup>134</sup> Wildlife is often caught or entangled in itinerant plastics, which can result in strangulation, difficulty eating, and drowning. Many species confuse bits of microplastic with phytoplankton and other food sources, which, when consumed, reduces stomach capacity, creates internal blockage, stunts growth, and causes internal injuries.<sup>135</sup> Plastic debris has also been identified as a medium for invasive species, like algae, barnacles and mollusks, to attach to and use to travel between ecosystems.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, petroleum-based pollution decreases photosynthesis in microorganisms that produce oxygen, and, when paired with the increased absorption of carbon dioxide into the oceans, results in impaired shellfish development, the destruction of coral reefs, the death of organisms at the bottom of the food chain, and increased toxicity of other pollutants.<sup>137</sup>

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132. Environment, UN. "Regional Seas Programme." UNEP, n.d. <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/regional-seas-programme>.

133. Ibid.

134. Sigler, Michelle. "The Effects of Plastic Pollution on Aquatic Wildlife: Current Situations and Future Solutions - Water, Air, & Soil Pollution." SpringerLink, October 18, 2014. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11270-014-2184-6>.

135. Ibid.

136. Ibid.

137. Human health and ocean pollution - PMC - national center for ..., n.d. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7731724/>.

Through a process known as bioamplification, these pollutants travel up the food chain, eventually making their way into humans.<sup>138</sup> When organisms consume toxic chemicals via contaminated food, air, or water, the contaminants are stored in fatty tissue, which subsequently increases their concentration, known as bioaccumulation. Biomagnification occurs as the organism is consumed by species higher on the food chain, which continually increases the concentration of the chemical. The higher the level on the food chain, the greater contaminant concentration.<sup>139</sup> It is through this process that chemicals and marine pollutants can easily make their way into human digestive systems and tissues, which negatively impacts human health.<sup>140</sup> Pollutants like methylmercury can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease and dementia, while manufactured chemicals like phthalates can damage the nervous system and increase risk of cancer.<sup>141</sup>

Plastic pollution not only impacts marine life and ecosystems, but is exacerbating climate change and the global temperature rise as well. Fossil-based plastics release greenhouse gasses at every stage of their life, which can be further accelerated when exposed to sunlight.<sup>142</sup> Plastics also disrupt the oceans' ability to act as a natural carbon sink. Plastic pollution causes phytoplankton excretion, a carbon-absorbing material, to be more buoyant.<sup>143</sup> The longer the material floats near the surface, the more carbon is able to escape back into the atmosphere.<sup>144</sup>

Marine pollution is also detrimental to tourism, fisheries and shipping. Fisheries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of marine pollution, especially plastic pollution, which can impact their profitability, productivity and safety.<sup>145</sup> In Mozambique, the fishing industry provides employment for nearly 202,000 people, almost half of whom are women. Furthermore, rural communities with high malnutrition rates are dependent on fisheries to provide adequate nutrition.<sup>146</sup> The damage caused by pollution and microplastics in the ocean directly harms impoverished and vulnerable communities.

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138. Reckendorf, Anja, Ursula Siebert, and Krishna Das. "Chemical Pollution and Diseases of Marine Mammals." SpringerLink, January 1, 1970. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-06836-](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-06836-2_5#:~:text=The%20toxic%20compounds%20are%20transferred,build%20up%20within%20the%20body.)

[2\\_5#:~:text=The%20toxic%20compounds%20are%20transferred,build%20up%20within%20the%20body.](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-06836-2_5#:~:text=The%20toxic%20compounds%20are%20transferred,build%20up%20within%20the%20body.)

139. Ibid.

140. Human health and ocean pollution - PMC - national center for ..., n.d. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7731724/>.

141. Ibid.

142. Helen V. Ford a. "The Fundamental Links between Climate Change and Marine Plastic Pollution." Science of The Total Environment, September 17, 2021. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969721054693#s0010>.

143. "Is Plastic Affecting the Ocean as a Carbon Sink? We Ask Tatiana Luján." ClientEarth, n.d. <https://www.clientearth.org/latest/latest-updates/opinions/is-plastic-affecting-the-ocean-as-a-carbon-sink-we-ask-tatiana-lujan/#:~:text=So%20it's%20not%20just%20that,carbon%20when%20exposed%20to%20sunlight.%E2%80%9D>.

144. Ibid.

145. Marine Plastics, fisheries and livelihoods - IUCN, n.d. [https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/marplasticcs\\_economic\\_policy\\_brief\\_mozambique\\_final.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/marplasticcs_economic_policy_brief_mozambique_final.pdf).

146. Ibid.

## Case Studies:

### *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*

On April 20, 2010, a surge of natural gas blasted through a concrete core recently installed on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig.<sup>147</sup> The gas traveled up to the rig's platform, where it ignited in an explosion that killed 11 workers and injured 17. The rig, located in Mississippi Canyon, United States, capsized and sank two days later, causing large volumes of oil to discharge into the Gulf. The initial volume of oil was estimated to be more than 60,000 barrels per day.<sup>148</sup> The spill continued for three months, or 87 days, before the well was able to be sealed, releasing an estimated 4,900,000 barrels of oil into the ocean. Though there were various cleanup efforts orchestrated, the economic and ecological impacts were dire. Citizens who depended on industries like fishing and tourism were left struggling as a result of closures and contamination.<sup>149</sup> The oil killed thousands of marine mammals and sea turtles, exposed thousands of protected species to oil, and destroyed their habitats.<sup>150</sup>

### *Plastic Pollution in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch*

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is a collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean, linked together by the North Pacific Subtropical Convergence Zone.<sup>151</sup> The majority of the garbage patch consists of non-biodegradable microplastics that are difficult to detect with the naked eye. The exact quantity of garbage in the North Pacific patch is hard to discern, as 70% of the debris sinks to the ocean floor. A study in 2018 estimated that nearly half of the patch's mass is made up of discarded synthetic fishing nets, largely due to the increase in fishing in recent years. The debris is harmful to marine life, as it can be mistakenly consumed, wildlife can become entangled, and the plastic itself leaks toxic chemicals into the ocean.<sup>152</sup> Because the garbage patch is so far from the coastline of any country, none will claim responsibility or attempt to clean the patch up. Many NGOs have committed to the cause, but it is estimated that it would take 67 ships one year to clean up just 1% of the patch.<sup>153</sup> One of the key ways to limit the patch size is reducing the overall production and use of single-use plastics.

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147. "Cleanup Efforts." Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Deepwater-Horizon-oil-spill/Cleanup-efforts>

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid.

150. US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "Deepwater Horizon: Effect on Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles." Deepwater Horizon: Effect on Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles, February 2, 2017.

<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/apr17/dwh-protected-species.html>.

151. "Great Pacific Garbage Patch." Education, n.d. <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.



## Subtopic 4: Illegal Fishing and its Impact on Marine Ecosystems and Coastal Communities

Illegal fishing occurs when fishing is in violation of national or international laws, regulations, or conservation measures. This may include unreported and unregulated fishing activities, all of which pose threats to marine ecosystems and coastal communities.<sup>154</sup> It contributes to overfishing, dwindling fish stocks, which disturb maritime ecosystems, thwarts sustainable development, and fuels the growth of global criminal organizations.<sup>155</sup> This form of environmental crime threatens the availability of food in many coastal areas as fish serves as a primary source of food for a plethora of people globally.<sup>156</sup> Law enforcement, international cooperation, and community involvement are all necessary components of a complete strategy to combat illegal fishing.

### Previous UN Action:

**UN Fish Stocks Agreement** — The UN Fish Stocks Agreement is a vital international agreement, established in 1995, that covers fish stock management and conservation outside of national borders. It elaborates on how states should cooperate to ensure conservation and promote the objective of the optimum utilization of fisheries resources both within and beyond the exclusive economic zone.<sup>157</sup> Its key objectives include long-term conservation, sustainable methods, and collaboration between nations. The agreement establishes detailed minimum international standards for the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks.<sup>158</sup> It ensures that actions taken for the conservation and management of those stocks in areas under national jurisdiction and in the adjacent high seas are compatible and coherent, and promotes effective management and conservation of high seas resources.<sup>159</sup>

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154. World Bank, “ILLEGAL LOGGING, FISHING, AND WILDLIFE TRADE: THE COSTS AND HOW TO COMBAT IT.”

155. Ibid.

156. Ibid.

157. “1995 United Nations Fish Stock Agreement: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.” United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge platform, n.d. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/oceans/unfishstock>.

158. United Nations, “1995 United Nations Fish Stock Agreement.”

159. Ibid.

**UNEP Regional Seas Programme** — The UNEP Regional Seas Programme is a collaborative effort to address the environmental issues affecting the world's shared oceans and coastlines.<sup>160</sup> It is a regional mechanism for conservation of the marine and coastal environment that has provided inter-governmental frameworks to tackle ocean degradation and land-based sources of pollution since 1974.<sup>161</sup> The programme focuses on capacity building, ecosystem conservation, and sustainable development. It has three types of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) that provide inter-governmental frameworks to address the degradation of the oceans and seas.<sup>162</sup>

## Current Issues

With fish stocks being harvested at unsustainable levels, the depletion and overfishing of various species disrupts the balance of marine ecosystems. This unsustainable practice can alter the size of the remaining fish, their reproductive strategy, and the rate at which they mature.<sup>163</sup> By removing key species and excessive amounts of fish, the imbalance created can weaken the food web which can impact the livelihood of other marine life, including endangered species such as corals and sea turtles.<sup>164</sup> This disregard for regulations and conservation measures makes it harder to maintain marine ecological health.

Another consequence of overfishing is the disruption to the marine ecosystem. Illegal fishing practices can involve destructive fishing methods, which can lead to high levels of bycatch – the unintentional capture of non-target species while fishing for different sea life.<sup>165</sup> This significant marine issue results in the senseless deaths of billions of fish, tens of thousands of sea turtles, and thousands of cetaceans. It involves marine mammals, seabirds, and other vulnerable species which can worsen imbalances and threats to marine ecology.<sup>166</sup>

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160. "Regional Seas Programme." UNEP, n.d. <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/regional-seas-programme>.

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid.

163. "What Is Overfishing? Facts, Effects and Overfishing Solutions." WWF.

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/overfishing#:~:text=It%20can%20change%20the%20size,like%20sea%20turtles%20and%20corals>.

164. Ibid.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

Illegal fishing and its ramifications on coastal communities can result in decreased food and economic security. This form of environmental crime reduces fish stocks and catch for legal fishermen, which leads to economic losses and lower income for coastal communities reliant on fishing for their livelihoods.<sup>167</sup> Though the demand for fish rises, fish populations are depleting creating a ripple effect on jobs within the fishing industry and other related coastal economies. By undermining legal fishing practices and fair competition due to the lower cost of illegal fishing activities, the economic imbalance around the world worsens.<sup>168</sup>

## Case Studies

### *Overfishing of Bluefin Tuna*

The Bluefin Tuna is a lucrative and highly coveted species native to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. However, the high demand for this species has led to excessive overfishing, severely depleting the Bluefin Tuna populations across oceans.<sup>169</sup> Due to the huge demand for Bluefin Tuna, a black market has developed, which has exacerbated overfishing and undermined conservation efforts.<sup>170</sup> This endangerment of this species has broader ecological impacts as it is an essential component of marine food webs with their decline potentially disrupting marine ecosystems. Though conservationists have advocated for strict regulations, their increased enforcement, and sustainable fishing practices, IUU fishing practices persist and continue to decrease Bluefin Tuna stocks.<sup>171</sup> For fishing towns and allied sectors, the fall in Atlantic Bluefin Tuna populations has negative economic effects. A reduction in fish stocks means less opportunities for local communities that rely on fishing as a source of income, creating financial difficulties such as fluctuation and instability in revenue – impacting their families and regional economy.<sup>172</sup>

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167. “What Is Overfishing? Facts, Effects and Overfishing Solutions.” WWF. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/overfishing#:~:text=It%20can%20change%20the%20size,like%20sea%20turtles%20and%20corals>.

168. Ibid.

169. “Bluefin Tuna.” WWF. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/species/bluefin-tuna#:~:text=Overfishing,in%20high%20end%20sushi%20markets>.

170. Ibid.

171. “Why Is the Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Being Overfished?” American Oceans, August 25, 2023. <https://www.americoceans.org/blog/atlantic-bluefin-tuna-overfishing/>.

172. Ibid.

### *IUU Fishing in West Africa*

The West African region is a global epicenter of IUU fishing activities. The prevalence of illegal fishing methods violate international regulations as perpetrators of such environmental crimes evade detection while contributing to environmental damage and overfishing.<sup>173</sup> It significantly affects the economy as it undermines food security, threatening local fisheries in coastal states by depriving them of a steady stream of revenue – a loss costing the region about US\$9.4 billion every year, equivalent to the combined annual GDP of Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Liberia.<sup>174</sup> The presence of foreign fishing fleets in West African waters are of major concern. With a history of abusing the region’s weak administration of governance, these fleets are known to frequently engage in IUU operations.<sup>175</sup> The pervasive problem of illegal fishing in this region has global implications due to the prospect of seafood obtained through IUU activities entering global markets and damaging sustainable and legal fisheries elsewhere. Coastal states are recommended to develop and oversee their fishing regulations by investing in surveillance technology, funding for law enforcement, and improvement of domestic and international legal systems.<sup>176</sup>

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173. Skrdlik, Josef. “Report: West Africa Is the Global Epicenter of Illegal Fishing.” OCCRP, October 28, 2022. <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/16963-report-west-africa-is-the-global-epicenter-of-illegal-fishing>.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid.



## Subtopic 5: Role of Corruption in Facilitating Environmental Crimes

Corruption is defined as “a dishonest, fraudulent, or even criminal act of an individual or organization, using entrusted authority or power to make a personal gain or other unethical or illegal benefits.”<sup>177</sup> In an environmental context, corruption facilitates environmental crimes by allowing perpetrators to avoid regulations and obtain permissions and concessions in “extractive industries and the renewable natural resource sectors (fisheries, forests and wildlife).”<sup>178</sup> Moreover, it undermines efforts to protect the environment, promotes unsustainable practices, and exacerbates the negative impacts of illegal activities. It can occur at any level, with petty corruption commonly referring to small-scale infractions, such as an individual bribing a public official to poach an endangered species, and grand corruption referring to larger offenses, like corporate interference in climate action bills, or the theft and embezzlement of climate funds.<sup>179</sup> The risk of corruption, regardless of scale, is more prevalent in developing nations, whose fragile governments and institutions lack the resources to supply proper procedures and checks that prevent corruption.<sup>180</sup> However, many large-scale treaties fail to adequately address the issue as well, such as the Paris Climate Agreement, which lacks the mechanisms to enforce the international accountability the agreement requires. Corruption requires robust governance systems, transparency, accountability, and the involvement of civil society.<sup>181</sup>

### Previous UN Action:

**General Assembly Political Declaration on Corruption** — In 2021, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Political Declaration titled “Our common commitment to effectively addressing challenges and implementing measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation.”<sup>182</sup> The document is a blueprint to help states combat bribery, money laundering, and abuse of power. The declaration was created in response to corruption-related resource loss, instability, and increased poverty. Member states promised to foster a culture of accountability and address the root vulnerabilities of fraud, while the Assembly pledged to aid states in strengthening law enforcement to investigate and prosecute corrupt individuals successfully.<sup>183</sup>

177. “Corruption.” Legal Information Institute, n.d. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/corruption>.

178. UN Human Rights Office, n.d. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/transformational-actions-sdg-other-UNCAC.docx>.

179. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2012/Corruption\\_Environment\\_and\\_the UNCAC.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2012/Corruption_Environment_and_the UNCAC.pdf).

180. “Climate Change and Corruption.” Green Economy Coalition, n.d. <https://www.greeneconomycoalition.org/news-and-resources/climate-change-and-corruption>.

181. Erickson, Campbell. “The Climate-Corruption Connection.” Harvard Political Review, February 27, 2021.

<https://harvardpolitics.com/the-climate-corruption-connection/>.

182. “Opening Special Session on Corruption, General Assembly Adopts Political Declaration with Road Maps to Help Countries Tackle Bribery, Money-Laundering, Abuse of Power | UN Press.” United Nations, June 2, 2021. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/ga12329.doc.htm>.

183. Ibid.

**Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat** — The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat Paper serves as an outline of the main policies the United Nations Secretariat uses to prevent and respond to fraud and corruption.<sup>184</sup> The framework applies to all staff under the United Nations, as well as any third parties involved contractually with the United Nations. The document maintains that staff have a duty to report corruption inside the UN to either Human Resources or the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which has a dedicated hotline.<sup>185</sup> OIOS is the main entity responsible for investigating serious crimes or acts of fraud. The Secretariat and other UN staff are obliged to protect the confidentiality of whistleblowers, and have a plan in place to prevent retaliation against those who step forward.<sup>186</sup>

**United Nations Convention against Corruption** — The UN Convention against Corruption is an international instrument adopted in 2003, and comprises four main parts: Prevention, Criminalization and Law Enforcement, International Cooperation, and Asset Recovery.<sup>187</sup> Prevention covers recommended legislation to enhance transparency, oversight and controls. Criminalization identifies the main corruption related crimes and offenses and mechanisms for prosecution. International Cooperation provides methods for countries to seek aid from other countries, and enables cooperation on corruption cases. Finally, Asset Recovery includes all means that states can use to track, seize, freeze, export and recover stolen assets.<sup>188</sup>

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184. “Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Framework of the United Nations Secretariat.” United Nations, September 9, 2016. <https://www.un.org/en/delegate/page/un-official-documents>.

185. Ibid.

186. Ibid.

187. “United Nations Convention Against Corruption: United Nations Development Programme.” UNDP, n.d.

<https://www.undp.org/lebanon/projects/united-nations-convention-against-corruption#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Convention%20Against,articles%20spread%20over%20eight%20chapters>.

188. Ibid.

## Current Issues

Corruption at any scale significantly fuels environmental degradation, supporting the destruction and exploitation of biodiversity worldwide.<sup>189</sup> It assists all forms of environmental crime, which consequently harms species, alters ecosystems, and negatively impacts the environment. Because corruption impedes public officials' ability to fulfill their duties, like managing natural resources, protecting borders, and regulating wildlife trade, it prevents nations from meeting both national and international sustainable goals.<sup>190</sup> Corruption can also indirectly inhibit a nation's ability to "go green" for a variety of reasons, including lowering income from taxes on natural resources, undermining administration, and misuse of funds allocated for environmental projects. Neither developed nor developing countries are immune to the effects of environmental corruption.<sup>191</sup>

Similarly, corruption contributes heavily to the climate crisis. Fraud and bribery in climate finance impair emission reduction efforts and cause the quality of adaptation infrastructures to decline.<sup>192</sup> In fact, the top recipients of climate finance are some of the most at risk of corruption. Investments in non-renewable energy that contribute heavily to greenhouse gas emissions are prolonged and promoted, often as a result of corporate interference. Corporate lobbyists target individual politicians, utilizing them to shape national policy away from climate action.<sup>193</sup>

Corruption also poses a significant risk to human health, exacerbating the negative health effects of climate change and biodiversity loss.<sup>194</sup> Corruption increases the threat of food and water insecurity, as a result of altered weather patterns, increased temperatures, and pollutants. It also increases the threat of respiratory and heat-related illnesses, as well as diseases spread by insects, like mosquitoes. Certain communities are more vulnerable to these risks than others, due to a variety of factors, including income levels, housing availability, education, and health care.<sup>195</sup>

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189. CAC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session9/CAC-COSP-2021-CRP.8\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/COSP/session9/CAC-COSP-2021-CRP.8_E.pdf).

190. Ibid.

191. Ibid.

192. U4 brief 2020:14 corruption and Climate Finance, n.d. <https://www.u4.no/publications/corruption-and-climate-finance.pdf>.

193. Ibid.

194. EPA, n.d. <https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-and-health-socially-vulnerable-people>.

195. Ibid.

Lastly, the impacts of corruption can promote both national and international conflict. Corruption, especially on a larger scale, undermines governments and authorities' influence, and weakens the power of the criminal code, which in turn encourages further crime and abuse of the law.<sup>196</sup> At the same time, environmental corruption impacts food and water sources, which in turn fuels conflict. 40% of internal armed conflicts over the past 60 years have been connected to natural resources, and that statistic will only continue to grow as environmental degradation continues. Competition over land, water, and other natural resources will continue to cause conflict unless corruption is effectively minimized.<sup>197</sup>

## Case Studies

### *Shell and Eni On Trial*

In 2018, a criminal case was brought against oil conglomerates Shell and Eni by prosecutors in Italy, over the alleged involvement of the companies in a 1.3 billion US dollar bribery scheme connected to the transfer of Nigerian oil license OPL 245, one of Nigeria's most valuable oil blocks.<sup>198</sup> According to investigations by Global Witness, the two companies paid 1.3 billion USD for the oil block in 2011. But, instead of the funds going to the Nigerian government for the benefit of the Nigerian people, 1.1 billion of those dollars were transferred to former oil minister and convicted money launderer, Daniel Etete.<sup>199</sup> Hundreds of thousands of dollars were then used as payment for the Nigerian president and other Nigerian public officials. Because of the lack of checks and regulations in Nigeria's oil industry, Shell, Eni, and other oil giants have poisoned water sources, damaged ecosystems, and profited off Nigerian resources while the Nigerian people remain in poverty, with little to no consequences.<sup>200</sup> In March of 2021, both companies were acquitted, being found not guilty of international corruption.<sup>201</sup>

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196. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2012/Corruption\\_Environment\\_and\\_the\\_UNCAC.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2012/Corruption_Environment_and_the_UNCAC.pdf).

197. States Must Transform Natural Resources from Driver of Conflict into Development Tool to Foster Peace, Cooperation, Secretary-General Tells Security Council | UN Press." United Nations, n.d. <https://press.un.org/en/2018/sc13540.doc.htm>.

198. On trial: Shell in Nigeria - amnesty. <https://www.amnesty.de/sites/default/files/2020-02/Amnesty-Bericht-Nigeria-Shell-on-trial-Februar-2020-ENG.pdf>.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

201. "Sorry Shell, Sorry Eni - Global Witness Is Not Going Away." Global Witness, n.d. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/sorry-shell-sorry-eni-global-witness-not-going-away/>.



### *Liberian Timber Exports*

There is an abundance of evidence that the West African rainforests of Liberia are being cut down and sold illegally, with the cooperation of powerful government officials.<sup>202</sup> A diplomatic document obtained by UK press outlets includes 39 incidents of lawbreaking or governance failure, and no action was taken to address them. The document, compiled by independent international monitors over the last three years, says the country's chief timber official runs his own "special task force" to bypass checkpoints that are there to prevent logging of virgin rainforest.<sup>203</sup> A letter signed by Forestry Management Official Doryen permitted export of the logs outside Liberia's official log-tracking system. Doyen, a close personal friend of the president of Liberia, has not been punished or removed from office, despite pressure from countries like the UK, which donates millions of British pounds to Liberia for forest conservation. It's estimated that 70% of Liberia's timber exports bypass the checking system put in place to protect the rainforest, causing environmental damage and costing the government money.<sup>204</sup>

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202. "Liberia May Have 'parallel System' for Illegal Log Exports." The Independent, February 21, 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/liberia-ap-george-weah-foreign-office-customs-b2286193.html>.

203. Ibid.

204. Ibid.

## Questions to Consider:

- How can countries enhance international cooperation to combat transnational environmental crime effectively?
- What role should INTERPOL play in facilitating collaboration and information exchange among member states?
- How successful has your country been in combating environmental crimes within its borders?
- How can it work toward combating environmental issues further?
- How do environmental crimes affect biodiversity?
- How do environmental crimes contribute to climate change, and how can efforts to combat environmental crime align with global climate action goals?
- How do environmental crimes negatively impact local communities within your country?
  - E.g. Communities living in and around endangered habitats and natural resources
  - What measures can nations implement to ensure that the fight against environmental crime includes measures to protect and support affected communities?
- What types of training programs can be established to equip law enforcement agencies and officials with the skills and knowledge needed to combat environmental crime effectively?
- How can countries ensure there is a balance between the need for wildlife conservation and protection with the legitimate use of natural resources in a sustainable manner?
- What role should corporations play in preventing environmental crime?
  - How can nations hold corporations accountable for their involvement in illegal activities that harm the environment?
- How can technology be employed to detect and prevent environmental crimes at sea and on land?
- How does IUU fishing contribute to the depletion of marine resources and negatively impact local economies and ecosystems?
  - How can countries collaborate to combat IUU fishing and promote sustainable fishing practices?
- What measures can be taken to dismantle criminal networks involved in environmental crimes like wildlife trafficking and illegal logging and disrupt their operations?

## Topic 2: Transnational Crime at Sea

Transnational organized crime at sea occurs within territorial waters or Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) around coastal states.<sup>205</sup> These illicit activities involve people, organizations, or networks that are based abroad and frequently take advantage of the huge and generally unregulated maritime surroundings.<sup>206</sup> Such groups operate out of numerous nations and pose a threat to security and safety not just on the high seas or territorial waters but also on the social and economic security of governments on land.<sup>207</sup> Due to complex jurisdictional issues and the complexity of keeping track of wide stretches of water, these offences frequently present considerable challenges to law enforcement.<sup>208</sup>

The lack of jurisdiction and vastness of maritime territories at sea makes it difficult to investigate and prosecute offenders, allowing these crimes to persist. It creates a safe haven of sorts for criminals to conduct their operations with relative impunity. The increased sophistication of transnational crime at sea transforms such crimes into transboundary threats requiring international cooperation to address it and nations must work together to combat illicit activity.<sup>209</sup> In addition, the environmental impact of such illegal conduct can have transnational impacts on marine ecosystems and the environment.<sup>210</sup> As these crimes include illegal pollution, wildlife trafficking, degradation and disruption of marine ecosystems, they put marine flora and fauna at risk of endangerment and increased vulnerability. There are also humanitarian concerns, as these crimes at sea may extend to human trafficking, the violations of human rights, migrant smuggling, and other forms of abuse.<sup>211</sup> Criminal networks may exploit populations by transporting migrants and refugees across maritime borders or endanger the lives of others when involved with acts of piracy which can lead to injuries, trauma, and fatalities.<sup>212</sup>

The adverse impacts on marine ecosystems' security, stability, and rule of law can be linked to the funding for criminal organizations executing transnational crimes at sea. Terrorists and rebels are increasingly using transnational organized crime to raise money and get the logistical support they need to carry out their violent activities.<sup>213</sup> They may use such fundings to finance other illegal enterprises such as terrorist activities and other broader security threats. The inflow of illegal revenues from maritime transnational crime may jeopardize the governance frameworks in impacted areas. Governments' ability to enact and implement laws, regulations, and marine security measures may be compromised by corruption, bribery, and influence-peddling.<sup>215</sup>

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205. Transnational Organized Crime at Sea: Smuggling and Trafficking of Migrants and Drugs, n.d.  
<https://www.aalco.int/Transnational%20Organized%20Crimes%20at%20Sea%20final.pdf>

206. Ibid.

207. Ibid.

208. Ibid.

209. "High Seas Crime Becoming More Sophisticated, Endangering Lives, International Security, Speakers Tell Security Council | UN Press." United Nations, n.d.  
<https://press.un.org/en/2019/sc13691.doc.htm>

210. Ibid.

211. Ibid.

212. Ibid.

213. "Transnational Organized Crime: A Growing Threat to National and International Security." National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.  
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/threat>

214. Ibid.

215. Ibid.

## Subtopic 1: Piracy and Armed Robbery

Piracy is defined as acts of robbery, violence, or any criminal acts committed by individuals or groups at sea.<sup>216</sup> Such acts are carried out for personal benefit and have been historically prevalent in particular regions where there is a dearth of marine law enforcement and poor governance. Armed robbery at sea occurs when any unlawful detention, assault, or threat of detention, other than "piracy," is carried out for personal gain and directed against a ship, or against people or property on board such a ship, within a State's territorial sea, archipelagic waterways, or internal waters.<sup>217</sup> Though it is similar to piracy, armed robbery targets cargo, personal belongings of crew members, or the ship's property, and often involves the use of weapons and violence.

### Previous UN Action:

**UNCLOS** — The UNCLOS is an international treaty that creates a thorough legal framework for the control and management of the oceans and seas around the world. The convention acts as a constitution for the world's oceans and seas.<sup>218</sup> By outlining states' legal rights and obligations with regard to dealing with piracy and armed robbery at sea under article 101, it offers a crucial legal basis for combating such crimes.<sup>219</sup> It addresses piracy by defining and allowing any state to take action against pirates on the high seas.

**International Maritime Organization (IMO)** — The IMO is a specialized agency of the UN that is responsible for overseeing worldwide marine and shipping regulations. The organization has implemented several initiatives to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea.<sup>220</sup> The agency establishes international norms, rules, and standards that control a range of maritime operations, including navigation, security, safety, and the preservation of the environment. Its primary goal is promoting secure, safe, and ecologically conscious shipping.<sup>221</sup> The IMO provides incident reports on piracy and armed robbery against ships, which include details of the attacks, and promotes international cooperation, laying down rules and making it easier for member nations and the marine industry to work together.<sup>222</sup>

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216. "Combating Transnational Organized Crime Committed at Sea." United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d.

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/GPTOC/Issue\\_Paper\\_-\\_TOC\\_at\\_Sea.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/GPTOC/Issue_Paper_-_TOC_at_Sea.pdf).

217. "Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Definitions and Actions." ReCAAP ISC, n.d.

[https://www.recaap.org/piracy\\_definitions\\_and\\_actions](https://www.recaap.org/piracy_definitions_and_actions).

218. "United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea." United Nations, n.d.

[https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf).

219. Ibid.

220. International Maritime Organization, n.d. <https://www.imo.org/>.

221. Ibid.

222. "Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships." International Maritime Organization.

<https://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Security/Pages/PiracyArmedRobberydefault.aspx>.



**Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS)** — The CGPCS is an international coalition that was set up to coordinate activities and encourage cooperation among governments, organizations, and stakeholders to combat piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia.<sup>223</sup> The escalation of piracy episodes in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, which had serious ramifications for maritime safety, international trade, and the protection of seafarers, prompted the formation of the group.<sup>224</sup> It was created on January 14, 2009 pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1851 as a voluntary forum bringing together nations, organizations, and business associations interested in preventing piracy.<sup>225</sup> It fosters international collaboration and coordination through information exchange, regional cooperation among nations in the Horn of Africa and adjacent regions, and awareness and advocacy.

## Current Issues

Piracy and armed robbery at sea raise humanitarian concerns regarding the physical and psychological harm inflicted on victims as they may undergo a plethora of human rights violations. These transnational crimes at sea relate to Article 3, the right to life, liberty, and security, and Article 5, freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as perpetrators endanger the lives of the victims by jeopardizing their security.<sup>226</sup> These crimes can create psychological trauma with long-lasting impacts on survivors of attacks, which may manifest as emotional distress and anxiety triggered by traumatic event recollections if they are not adequately supported through their rehabilitation.<sup>227</sup>

Another issue concerning these international crimes at sea is how regions with political instability and weak governance may become havens for criminals who may exploit the lack of effective law enforcement in such regions.<sup>228</sup> They might serve as a breeding environment for transnational maritime crimes as they enable pirate gangs to operate with minimal danger or risk. It also impacts regional stability as the proliferation of such crimes at sea can disrupt maritime trade.<sup>229</sup> With weaker governance and economic challenges plaguing nations, transnational criminal activity at sea disrupts the flow of goods, raw materials, and commodities along maritime trade routes.<sup>230</sup> This can lead to increased costs and delays in shipping operations, hindering economic growth and development of nations impacted by supply chain interruptions.<sup>231</sup> Reduced trade can hurt economies, causing unemployment and obstructing efforts to fight poverty.

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223. “Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia.” U.S. Department of State, n.d. <https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2016/255175.htm#:~:text=The%20Contact%20Group%20on%20Piracy,an%20interest%20in%20combating%20piracy>.

224. Ibid.

225. Ibid.

226. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>.

227. Ziello, Antonio, Rolando Angioli, Angiola Fasanaro, and Francesco Amenta. “Psychological Consequences in Victims of Maritime Piracy: The Italian Experience.” *International maritime health*. Accessed September 3, 2023. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24072540/>.

228. Ibid.

229. “Piracy, Armed Robbery Declining in Gulf of Guinea, but Enhanced National, Regional Efforts Needed for Stable Maritime Security, Top Official Tells Security Council | UN Press.” United Nations, November 22, 2022. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15113.doc.htm>.

230. Ibid.

231. Ibid.

## Case Studies:

### *Somali Piracy in the Gulf of Aden*

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden is an ongoing transnational problem that obstructs the passing of a large portion of the world's trade moving through the critical maritime region. As a hotspot for piracy and armed robbery at sea, the region's strategic importance makes it vital to stop such crimes for economic, safety, and security reasons.<sup>232</sup> Somali piracy increased in the early 2000s and involved pirates stealing commercial ships and demanding substantial ransoms, driven by a lawlessness on land and economic incentives.<sup>233</sup> The vast area of the gulf along with the need for cooperation amongst regional coastal states to combat the ever-evolving tactics of pirates highlight the consequences of piracy on the shipping industry and safety of seafarers.<sup>234</sup> Somali pirates depict how criminal networks can cross international borders as they frequently operate out of Somalia, yet attack ships in international waters showing the transnational nature of this illicit activity.

### *Piracy in the Strait of Malacca*

The problem of piracy in the Malacca Strait, a crucial shipping route in Southeast Asia, is a persistent issue with pirates targeting ships, particularly cargo and oil tankers, for piracy and robbery.<sup>235</sup> The Malacca Strait is a vital passageway for international trade that connects the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. Piracy continues to be a serious threat to trade and shipping within the region. Motivated by financial incentives that come from releasing hijacked vessels and crew members, pirates create geopolitical complexities in the strait and its perimeter bordering the South China Sea – making it difficult to properly coordinate maritime security measures.<sup>236</sup> To deal with the ongoing threat, continued monitoring and collaboration are required. The security implications of this form of piracy extend to shipping companies due the hijacking of vessels and kidnapping of crew members, as well as regional government actors as these maritime crimes have broader security challenges impacting littoral states' stability.<sup>237</sup>

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232. "End Piracy in the Gulf of Aden." U.S. Naval Institute, June 2017. <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/june/end-piracy-gulf-aden>.

233. Ibid.

234. Ibid.

235. McCauley, Adam. "Pirates in Southeast Asia: The World's Most Dangerous Waters." Time, n.d. <https://time.com/piracy-southeast-asia-malacca-strait/>.

236. Ibid.

237. Ibid.

## Subtopic 2: Arms Trafficking through Maritime Routes

Arms trafficking through maritime routes is the illicit movement of military equipment by sea, including firearms and ammunition.<sup>238</sup> There are various different strategies employed to move arms and ammunition overseas, such as concealing the contraband among goods and utilizing circuitous trade routes to make surveillance of ships more difficult. Inadequate monitoring, patrolling and enforcement of coasts and ports has allowed maritime crime to spread significantly.<sup>239</sup> This form of transnational crime poses security threats for countries worldwide as such arms can be used to support conflicts and contribute to instability in different regions.

### Previous UN Action:

**Arms Trade Treaty** — The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 2 April 2013, and aims to control the global traffic in conventional weapons and prevent them from being diverted into illegal channels. The treaty promotes cooperation, transparency, and responsible action within the international community, promoting peace, security, and stability internationally and regionally.<sup>240</sup>

**Resolution 2616** — Resolution 2616 was adopted in 2021 by the UNSC. The resolution focuses on the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation of and diversion of arms and related materials in violation of Council-mandated arms embargoes.<sup>241</sup> The resolution includes measures to counter illicit trafficking and diversion of arms and related materiel, as well as illicit financing, and encourages Member States, as well as relevant international organizations, to provide training for national customs, border control, and other such relevant agencies, to carry out inspections regarding Council mandated embargoes.<sup>242</sup>

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238. Global Study on - united nations office on drugs and crime, n.d. [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Firearms/2020\\_REPORT\\_Global\\_Study\\_on\\_Firearms\\_Trafficking\\_2020\\_web.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Firearms/2020_REPORT_Global_Study_on_Firearms_Trafficking_2020_web.pdf).

239. “Most Ships Involved in Arms and Drugs Trafficking Are Based in World’s Richest Countries, Says SIPRI.” SIPRI, January 30, 2012. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2012/most-ships-involved-arms-and-drugs-trafficking-are-based-worlds-richest-countries-says-sipri>.

240. “The Arms Trade Treaty: Home Page.” The Arms Trade Treaty | Home Page, n.d. <https://thearmstradetreaty.org/>.

241. “Resolution 2616 (2021) / .” United Nations, n.d. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3952180?ln=en>.

242. Ibid.

**UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)** — Adopted in 2000 by the UN General Assembly, UNTOC is the main international instrument used to fight against transnational crime.<sup>243</sup> One of the treaty's three protocols directly targets arms trafficking, titled The Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. This protocol outlines a series of crime-control measures that include the establishment of criminal offenses related to illegal manufacturing of, and trafficking in, firearms, a system of government authorizations or licensing, and the marking and tracing of firearms.<sup>244</sup>

**International Tracing Instrument** — The International Tracing Instrument, adopted in 2005, requires States to ensure that weapons are properly marked and that records are kept to combat illegal trade of arms.<sup>245</sup> The ITI provides a framework for cooperation in weapons tracing, and is often combined with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, or PoA. The PoA pushes governments to improve national firearm laws and regulations, import and export laws, and stockpile management.<sup>246</sup>

## Current Issues

The illegal trafficking of arms and weapons can both illicit and exacerbate conflict in all regions of the world. Conflict zones tend to stockpile large amounts of weapons and firearms that circulate throughout the area and, due to their long lifespan, often end up in the hands of criminals and crime groups.<sup>247</sup> Organized crime groups use illegally obtained arms to participate in conflict, enforce violence and commit crimes, and are often directly involved in the trafficking process as well.<sup>248</sup> These weapons enable the groups to threaten and extort communities and state governments, and execute robberies, hijackings, and poaching.<sup>249</sup> The illegal arms market is the third most prevalent criminal market globally, and in 2017, only 12% of the estimated 857 million weapons in civilian hands were registered.<sup>250</sup>

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243. "United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime." United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>.

244. Ibid.

245. "Programme of Action on Small Arms and Its International Tracing Instrument." United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, n.d. <https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/programme-of-action/#:~:text=In%202005%20they%20also%20adopted,in%20the%20Programme%20of%20Action.>

246. Ibid.

247. "Arms Trafficking and Organized Crime." Global Initiative, August 23, 2022. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime/>.

248. "Addressing the Linkages between Illicit Arms, Organized Crime and Armed Conflict - World." ReliefWeb, September 15, 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/addressing-linkages-between-illicit-arms-organized-crime-and-armed-conflict>.

249. "Arms Trafficking and Organized Crime." Global Initiative, August 23, 2022. <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/arms-trafficking-and-organized-crime/>.

250. Ibid.

Illicit arms trade can disrupt peacebuilding efforts and post-conflict reconstruction by perpetuating violence. The overabundance of illegally obtained arms, especially in conflict zones, can create a spiral in which local communities and businesses procure illicit arms as a means of self-protection.<sup>251</sup> This creates more potential for violence, reinforcing the cycle. In conflict zones, the increase in arms imports by 10% increases the risk of violence and internal conflict by 8% from the baseline risk.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, the proliferation of unregistered arms and ammunition is described as one of the biggest threats to peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts. Illegally obtained arms obstruct humanitarian efforts and allow human rights abuses to continue.<sup>253</sup>

Finally, arms trafficking can have harmful economic implications, disrupting trade and economic development in affected countries.<sup>254</sup> Conflicts regularly result in loss of life, the deterioration of infrastructure and government institutions, political instability, and the obstruction of the labour force, the effects of which can be felt years after the cease-fires.<sup>255</sup> In low-income countries particularly, high levels of conflict halt economic growth, reduce life expectancy, and shorten the duration of education. These impacts are not limited to the conflicted region, as combat typically spills into neighbouring countries, disturbing both regional and international economic activities. It amplifies uncertainty and trade disruption.<sup>256</sup>

## Case Studies:

**Somalian Arms Smuggling** — On 6 January, US command forces intercepted a dhow in international waters between Iran and Yemen carrying over 2,000 AK-47 assault rifles.<sup>257</sup> The weapons were reportedly destined for the violent extremist groups in Somalia. Thousands of illicit weapons are transported via maritime routes to Somalia, a network that extends to violent armed groups in Kenya, Ethiopia and Mozambique, a threat to security in an already volatile region. Illicit trafficking to Yemen and Somalia pose a significant threat, as it not only involves firearms and explosive materials but also weapons of mass destruction.<sup>258</sup> With the longest coastline on Mainland Africa, Somalia's coast has the potential to be a major economic driver. However, with a reputation as the launching point for terrorism, piracy, human trafficking and smuggling operations, Somalia's efforts to commercialize its marine resources are obstructed.<sup>259</sup>

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251. Ibid.

252. "Weapons and War: The Effect of Arms Transfers on Internal Conflict." *Journal of Development Economics*, November 8, 2022. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0304387822001432>.

253. "Rapid Spread of Small Arms, Light Weapons Still Threatening World Peace, Exacerbating Plight of Civilians in Conflict Zones, Disarmament Chief Tells Security Council | UN Press." United Nations, n.d. <https://press.un.org/en/2021/sc14656.doc.htm>.

254. "Economic and Social Impacts of Conflict: A Cross-Country Analysis." *Economic Modelling*, August 10, 2022. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264999322002267>.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid.

257. ISSAfrica.org. "An Ocean of Weapons: Arms Smuggling to Somalia." ISS Africa, February 7, 2023. <https://issafrika.org/iss-today/an-ocean-of-weapons-arms-smuggling-to-somalia>.

258. "Gulf of Aden and Red Sea." United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/piracy/GARS.html>.

259. Ibid.



**Somali Pirate Defence Arms Stockpiling** — In an attempt to combat the increased frequency of Somali pirate attacks, private companies offering protection against pirates have begun stockpiling weapons in “floating armories.”<sup>260</sup> These armories are vessels stocked with small arms, ammunition and body armor, scattered across the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. They are used to bypass smuggling laws, as carrying weapons into a country can be considered smuggling arms.<sup>261</sup> Before the armories were introduced, protection companies would resort to stockpiling weapons that would be dumped into the ocean before docking at a port. The legal status of these armories is unclear, and industry experts are concerned that they could be vulnerable to attack.<sup>262</sup> While the presence of armed guards on ships has reduced pirate attacks, officials are concerned the armories could be used to smuggle illegal weapons or weapons of mass destruction, and could be hijacked by terrorist groups operating in the area. For this reason, many countries are still in debate about legalizing the use of these armories.<sup>263</sup>

### Subtopic 3: Maritime Terrorism

Maritime terrorism is the systematic use or the threat of violence against international shipping and maritime services by a person or group in order to terrorize and intimidate a civilian populace for political aspirations or goals.<sup>264</sup> These acts are intended to bring forth widespread fear and panic regarding a terrorist groups' purpose of advancing political, ideological, or religious objectives through violent means. It poses serious security risks since it preys on marine areas' weaknesses, targets major economic routes, and jeopardizes coastal regions' stability. Such crimes may target a range of entities using various tactics, including hijacking vessels, conducting bombings, and employing other warfare techniques.

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260. “Piracy Fears over Ships Laden with Arms in International Waters—Somali Pirates: Concern over Floating Armories.” The Guardian, January 10, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/10/pirate-weapons-floating-armories>.

261. Ibid.

262. Ibid.

263. Ibid.

264. Karim, Md Saiful. “The International Law of Maritime Terrorism.” Brill, January 1, 2017.

<https://brill.com/display/book/9789004329294/B9789004329294-s003.xml#:~:text=maritime%20terrorism%20as%20the%20systematic,Samuel%20Pyatt%20Menefee%20defines%20maritime>.

## Previous UN Action:

**Resolution 1540** — Resolution 1540 strives to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to non-state actors, such as terrorists and criminal organizations. It aims to prevent the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery by requiring UN member states to adopt and implement measures to stop the spread of WMD-related materials and technologies.<sup>265</sup> To address crimes including maritime terrorism, the resolution focuses on strengthening national legal frameworks, tightening export controls, and encouraging global cooperation.<sup>266</sup> Its provisions focus on strengthening national controls over exports and imports, and ensuring more control over maritime transports and port facilities as part of increasing international cooperation.<sup>267</sup>

**UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)** — The UNCCT is a specialized UN organization created to support member countries in their efforts to stop and combat terrorism. It acts as a focal point for knowledge exchange, technical support, and capacity building to help nations better meet the problems posed by terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>268</sup> The organization focuses on the implementation of the pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and works to develop counter-terrorism projects and initiatives, including those targeting maritime safety.<sup>269</sup> To counter radicalization and other factors that may contribute to acts of terrorism, the UNCCT urges member states to develop strategies to improve their capacity to prevent and combat the unlawful use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims.<sup>270</sup>

**Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)** — The GCTF is an international organization established to improve international collaboration and coordination in the fight against terrorism on the global stage. Created in 2011, the forum created rules and programs to improve counterterrorism efforts which extend to maritime security and the prevention of terrorist activities at sea.<sup>271</sup> As an informal and apolitical platform, the GCTF's main goal is to lessen the vulnerability of people all around the world to terrorism by using knowledge and resources to prevent, stop, and punish terrorist attacks as well as combat incitement and terrorism recruitment. The multilateral organization supports regional initiatives to address terrorism threats in specific geographic areas.<sup>272</sup>

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265. "Resolution 1540 (2004) Vital Component in Non-Proliferation Architecture, but Full Implementation Remains 'Long-Term Task', Committee Chair Tells Security Council | UN Press." United Nations, March 23, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15241.doc.htm>.

266. Ibid.

267. Ibid.

268. "Background | Office of Counter-Terrorism." United Nations, n.d. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/background>.

269. Ibid.

270. Ibid.

271. "Disrupt the Networks: Preventing and Countering..." Global Counterterrorism Forum Website, n.d. <https://www.thegctf.org/>.

272. Ibid.

**Resolution 1373** — UNSC Resolution 1373 was adopted in 2001, following the September 11th terrorist attacks, as a pivotal counter terrorism measure. It urges states to exchange their intelligence on terrorist organizations and modify their domestic legislation in order to ratify all of the terrorism-related international treaties.<sup>273</sup> The resolution calls on all members to take proactive steps against terrorism, such as stopping the funding of such activities, collaborating internationally, and making terrorism-related offences illegal in order to underscore the need for international collaboration.<sup>274</sup>

## Current Issues

As coastal states have significant maritime territories that need to be monitored and protected with strict security measures. Yet their vastness makes it difficult for governments to adequately patrol, monitor, and address security concerns in their marine domains, an issue closely tied to maritime terrorism.<sup>275</sup> These structures are exposed to a multitude of physical and cybersecurity threats to their information management systems.<sup>276</sup> Maritime terrorists may exploit the vulnerabilities of such structures and utilize them to facilitate covert movements and access dangerous materials or weapons – which may be used to inflict significant harm.

Maritime terrorism’s potential consequences may include regional economic disruptions. It can disrupt international trade, damage ports, and create uncertainties in global supply chains as this form of transnational crime at sea has the potential to target key ports and other maritime infrastructure. These attacks can render ports temporarily ineffective, hampering storage, logistics, and loading and unloading operations. This can bring uncertainty into global supply networks since organizations, industries and businesses depend on reliable and timely delivery of goods.

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273. “United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001).” United Nations, September 28, 2001.  
[https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/terrorism/res\\_1373\\_english.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/terrorism/res_1373_english.pdf).

274. Ibid.

275. “2023-002-Worldwide-Maritime Port Vulnerabilities - Foreign Adversarial Technological, Physical, and Cyber Influence.” 2023-002-Worldwide-Maritime Port Vulnerabilities - Foreign Adversarial Technological, Physical, and Cyber Influence | MARAD, n.d.  
<https://www.maritime.dot.gov/msci/2023-002-worldwide-maritime-port-vulnerabilities-foreign-adversarial-technological-physical#:~:text=Maritime%20ports%20facilities%2C%20and%20infrastructure,port%20equipment%20and%20supply%20chain.>

276. Ibid.

Furthermore, the environmental threat of maritime terrorism is multifaceted. Perpetrators of such crimes may target offshore oil platforms, tankers or refineries that can lead to oil spills, leading to harm to marine biodiversity, loss of habitat whilst reducing the insulating-capacity of mammals with fur.<sup>277</sup> Terrorist organizations may conduct attacks on crucial maritime facilities as a form of environmental ransom, demanding money or concessions from corporations and governments.<sup>278</sup> Due to the intersection of maritime terrorism and environmental threats, it is necessary to develop countermeasures that protect security, the environment, and domestic as well as international economic stability.

## Case Studies:

### *Somali Pirates hijacking of Maersk Alabama in 2009*

The Maersk Alabama, a container ship flying the flag of the United States, was captured by Somali pirates in April 2009 as it was sailing toward Mombasa, Kenya.<sup>279</sup> Realizing the serious risk to his men, Captain Richard Phillips offered himself as a hostage to the pirates in exchange for their assurance of their safety.<sup>280</sup> A high-stakes confrontation between the pirates and the U.S. Navy followed, as the pirates made a number of requests during the duration of the standoff.<sup>281</sup> However, Navy SEAL shooters intervened and defeated the pirates, freeing Captain Phillips and putting an end to the hostage situation –portraying the determination of the international community to combat piracy in the region.<sup>282</sup> The necessity for concentrated international action to combat piracy and armed robbery at sea, particularly in vital waterways like the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, raises questions regarding maritime security. The Maersk Alabama hijacking hindered maritime trade and garnered wide-spread attention, and highlighted how piracy can have significant economic repercussions that affect not only maritime firms but also international supply chains.<sup>283</sup>

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277. US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “How Does Oil Impact Marine Life?” NOAA’s National Ocean Service, March 14, 2019. <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/oilimpacts.html>.

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279. “Somali Pirates Hijack Maersk Alabama Ship.” HISTORY, April 1, 2020. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/somali-pirates-hijack-maersk-alabama-ship>.

280. Ibid.

281. Ibid.

282. Ibid.

283. Ibid.

### *Attack on the USS Cole in 2000*

The USS Cole, a US Navy guided-missile destroyer, was attacked by suicide bombers from the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda on October 12, 2000 as it refueled in the Yemeni port of Aden.<sup>284</sup> A small boat, loaded with about 700 pounds of TNT in explosives, approached the USS Cole moments before the explosives were set off by the suicide bombers on the boat, resulting in huge blast which tore a hole in the hull of the ship.<sup>285</sup> The attack illustrates the intersection of terrorism and maritime activities as it demonstrates how targeting maritime assets such as naval vessels are targets of broader terrorist strategies. As Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attack, the global reach of the transnational terrorist organization demonstrates the vulnerability of well-armed naval vessels to terrorist threats.<sup>286</sup> The attack underscores the need for legal frameworks to address maritime terrorism in light of the jurisdictional challenges of securing the oceans.

## Subtopic 4: Money Laundering through Maritime Channels

Money laundering through maritime channels is defined as the process of concealing the sources of illicit funds or illegal profits earned through criminal activity, such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking, or corruption, through the maritime sector.<sup>287</sup> One of the primary strategies of maritime money laundering is through a process known as trade-based money laundering, in which criminals attempt to disguise the origin of funds by utilizing the global trade market. There are various different methods of trade-based laundering, including under/over invoicing, which means a good is “sold” for a much higher price than it would be sold for commercially, misrepresentation of goods, in which the individual misrepresents what it is being sold, and fictitious trades, in which no goods have been bought or sold, and the offender entirely makes up the transaction.<sup>288</sup> Because the naval trade sector incorporates many sectors of the global market, including fishing, shipment of goods, and sale of marine animals, the maritime sector makes up a large portion of international trade, making it vulnerable to money laundering schemes.<sup>289</sup> Another technique is bulk cash smuggling, in which criminals use vessels to physically move large sums of cash to evade detection by authorities.<sup>290</sup> Money laundering can have detrimental effects both socially and economically.

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284. “USS Cole Bombing.” FBI, May 18, 2016. <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/uss-cole-bombing>.

285. Ibid.

286. Ibid.

287. “Trade-Based Money Laundering and Maritime Piracy Crime.” sanction scanner, n.d. <https://sanctionscanner.com/blog/trade-based-money-laundering-and-maritime-piracy-crime-456>.

288. “TBML: What Is Trade-Based Money Laundering?” FICO Decisions Blog, n.d. <https://www.fico.com/blogs/tbml-what-trade-based-money-laundering>.

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## Previous UN Action:

**UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)** — Though this treaty does not explicitly target arms trafficking through maritime routes, as the most prominent international legal instrument used to fight transnational crime, it targets organized crime, a sector directly related to money laundering.<sup>291</sup> The treaty encourages states to create domestic offences for lesser-known crimes such as money laundering. It encourages detection and monitoring of the movements of proceeds of crime, property, equipment or other instrumentalities and methods used for the transfer, concealment or disguise of such proceeds, property, equipment or other instrumentalities.<sup>292</sup>

**The Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** — The FATF is an intergovernmental organization that is focused on combating money laundering, terrorist and proliferation financing.<sup>293</sup> The organization releases guidelines and recommendations to member countries, which aid nations in strengthening their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing frameworks, and provide an international standard.<sup>294</sup>

**Global Programme against Money Laundering** — The Global Programme against Money Laundering is a UNODC initiative established in 1997 to help Member States combat money laundering related to illicit trafficking in drugs.<sup>295</sup> It urges Member States to develop legislative frameworks to criminalize money laundering, establish effective financial and regulatory regimes, and implement law enforcement measures to combat money laundering criminals. The Programme aims to provide training for legal and financial regulatory authorities, and to provide databases and analysis of information that Member States and organizations involved in the fight against money laundering can use.<sup>296</sup>

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291. United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the ..., n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>.

292. Ibid.

293. Home, n.d. <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Fatfrecommendations/Fatf-recommendations.html>.

294. Ibid.

295. Global Programme Against Money Laundering - United Nations Office on ..., n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/pdf/gpml.pdf>.

296. Ibid.

## Current Issues

Money laundering is an effort to disguise money obtained as a result of illegal activities without attracting the attention of authorities, so it is directly tied in with many different forms of crime.<sup>297</sup> However, the money obtained is typically used to fund other criminal activities and organized crime. Criminal groups often rely on laundered funds to fuel activities like corruption, fraud, human trafficking, and illicit weapons trade. These activities in turn generate more profit, repeating the cycle. The money is used to operate and expand criminal empires.<sup>298</sup>

Furthermore, laundered money can be used to finance severe acts of terrorism, which pose threats to the security of ports, vessels, and coastal areas.<sup>299</sup> Terrorists and terrorist organizations rely on large sums of money to fund their ventures, which can be obtained through money laundering. Maritime terrorism, in particular, is a prevalent threat to international security, as lesser regulated marine spaces are an ideal space for terrorist organizations to carry out operations or as a medium of transportation.<sup>300</sup> Money laundering supports the continued practice of these attacks.

Money laundering also harms the economy, as it diverts resources to less productive areas of the economy, disrupting economic growth. It promotes crime and corruption and inhibits long-term economic growth by distorting international trade and capital flows. And in developing countries, the loss of large amounts of capital can drain scarce resources, significantly harming economic growth.<sup>301</sup>

Money laundering and tax evasion cause governments substantial revenue loss, which then hampers said governments' ability to fund development schemes that would benefit the population.<sup>302</sup> The loss of capital impacts the nation's ability to operate, limiting its ability to provide jobs, healthcare, and unemployment relief, all programs that many citizens depend heavily on. Money laundering has adverse social costs that directly harm not only governments but citizens as well.<sup>303</sup>

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297. Canada, Public Safety. "Anti-Money Laundering." Public Safety Canada, May 16, 2023. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/nt-mny-lndrng/index-en.aspx>.

298. Ibid.

299. "Overview." United Nations: Office on Drugs and Crime, n.d. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/overview.html>.

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## Case Studies:

### *Russian Laundromat*

The Russian Laundromat scandal was a large-scale money laundering scheme responsible for moving billions of dollars out of the Russian economy and into Western banks.<sup>304</sup> Money entered the Laundromat through a series of shell companies that only existed on paper. Some of these funds were diverted from the Russian Treasury. Money which could have been used to fight poverty, modernize healthcare systems, or repair infrastructures was instead spent on Western luxury goods, rock bands touring Russia, and to fund a Polish political group that promoted Russia's agenda on the EU.<sup>305</sup> To launder the money, participants would set up two fake companies, Company A and Company B. They would then forge papers in which Company A would "lend" money to Company B, though no money actually changed hands.<sup>306</sup> A Russian company seeking to launder funds would guarantee the debt. Company B would then default on the loan, claiming bankruptcy. Company A would then call upon the Russian company to pay back the loan they guaranteed. A crucial part of the scheme was involving a Moldovan citizen in the forged deal.<sup>307</sup> This allowed the matter to be settled in Moldovan court, where corrupt judges would order the Russian company to pay back the sum of the loan to Company A. The funds would be transferred to a Moldovan bank account, back into the hands of the shell companies, legitimized and ready for use. By repeating this process, perpetrators were estimated to have laundered close to 80 billion USD out of the Russian economy.<sup>308</sup>

### *Swiss Money Laundering*

In 2022, Credit Suisse was convicted of failing to prevent money laundering by a Bulgarian cocaine trafficking gang.<sup>309</sup> The bank's lax money laundering checks allowed an employee of the bank to aid the Bulgarian mafia in transferring funds, despite glaring evidence that the money had not been obtained legally. Said employee testified that the bank was well aware the money, which was sometimes delivered to the bank in suitcases filled with cash, came from a gang tied to the South American drug trade and various murders.<sup>310</sup> The courts decided Credit Suisse was complicit in laundering the money, as the legal team, management, and compliance department failed to enforce anti-money laundering policies. The bank was ordered to pay 21 million USD in damages, while the employee who facilitated the laundering was sentenced to 20 months in prison.<sup>311</sup>

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304. Occrp. "The Russian Laundromat Exposed." OCCRP, n.d. <https://www.occrp.org/en/laundromat/the-russian-laundromat-exposed/>.

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306. Jass. "The Russian Laundromat - KYC-Chain." KYC, March 6, 2020. <https://kyc-chain.com/the-russian-laundromat/>.

307. Ibid.

308. Ibid.

309. Ewing, Jack. "Credit Suisse Is Fined for Helping a Bulgarian Drug Ring Launder Money, a Court Said." The New York Times, June 27, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/27/business/credit-suisse-fine-bulgarian-drug-ring.html>.

310. Ibid.

311. Ibid.

## Subtopic 5: Role of Port Infrastructure in Ensuring Effective Security and Surveillance

Port infrastructure ensures effective security and monitoring in maritime areas.<sup>312</sup> As entry and exit points for goods and travel, ports are susceptible to a variety of security risks, such as terrorism, illegal trafficking, smuggling, and piracy. Strong security and monitoring measures within port facilities are necessary to maintain secure marine operations given the possible dangers posed by numerous transnational crimes.<sup>313</sup> Methods for surveillance include video surveillance and CCTV systems, perimeter intrusion detection systems (PIDS), cybersecurity measures, security personnel and training, and international and regional cooperation.<sup>314</sup> The infrastructure of ports plays a vital role in ensuring the safety of personnel and assets as well as trade facilitation as secure facilities instill confidence in ports contribution to a nation’s economy. Thus, it is crucial to safeguard this economic lifeline by avoiding disruptions brought on by illegal activity.<sup>315</sup>

### Previous UN Action:

**International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code)** — The ISPS Code is a framework designed by the IMO through which ships and port facilities can cooperate to detect and deter acts which pose a threat to maritime security.<sup>316</sup> It aims to increase the safety of port buildings and ships. The code was adopted in response to growing worries about maritime terrorism to stop terrorist attacks on ships, ports, and other maritime infrastructure.<sup>317</sup> Its key features include security plans and coordination, such as three levels of security – normal, heightened, and exception – that reflect the impending danger or threat of danger.<sup>318</sup>

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312. “Security in Ports.” International Labour Office IMO, n.d. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms\\_742633.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_742633.pdf).

313. Ibid.

314. Ibid.

315. Ibid.

316. “International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.” LR, n.d. <https://www.lr.org/en/services/classification-certification/isps-code/#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20ISPS%20Code,threats%20within%20an%20international%20framework>.

317. Ibid.

318. Ibid.

## Current Issues

The emergence of security threats such as cyberattacks, terrorism, piracy, smuggling and other transnational crimes has changed the threat landscape. It raises concerns regarding the detection of anomalies, suspicious activity, and unauthorized entry to port facilities as ports play a vital role in facilitating the effective flow of products and commodities.<sup>319</sup> These threats require improved security measures to prevent and deter criminals from attacking port infrastructure. A proactive, innovative, and flexible approach to the function of port infrastructure in maintaining efficient security and monitoring is required in light of evolving security risks.<sup>320</sup> Port infrastructure must evolve to address new security concerns and create a resilient maritime environment.

Port congestion and efficiency is another issue facing port facilities as they try to balance security measures with the need for efficient cargo handling and smooth operations. These interconnected factors impede the success of port security and surveillance systems as they can reduce attention to security and hinder response times in reaching critical areas.<sup>321</sup> This problem can inadvertently allow transnational crimes at sea including smuggling and trafficking to be made easier as criminal networks may take advantage of the disarray.

Screening challenges are a critical part of port security as container screening can help prevent the movement of illicit goods, such as drugs, contraband, and potential WMDs.<sup>322</sup> Without adequate technological advancements and sophisticated methods to handle massive volumes of containers, perpetrators of transnational crimes at sea may conceal illegal materials by giving fraudulent information or an avenue to modify container contents to hide banned goods.<sup>323</sup> Hence, it is vital to integrate cutting-edge surveillance systems and cybersecurity measures to counter sophisticated threats to ensure ports do not lack an appropriate amount of resources.<sup>324</sup>

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319. "Innovation in Port Risk Management." Prosertek, n.d. <https://prosertek.com/blog/innovation-in-port-risk-management/>.

320. Ibid.

321. Ibid.

322. Ibid.

323. Ibid.

324. Ibid.



## Case Studies:

### *Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands*

The Port of Rotterdam is one of the biggest and busiest ports in the world, making it a prime target for many international crimes, such as drug trafficking, smuggling, and illegal trading.<sup>325</sup> It is at the epicenter of global marine trade thanks to its advantageous location as a gateway to Europe. The port has made investments in cutting-edge port infrastructure and security measures: it is protected by an integrated security approach encompassing law enforcement, customers, the private sectors, and a network of cameras and other cutting-edge security technologies that are essential for tracking ship movements, managing cargo, and spotting potential security issues.<sup>326</sup> It has been incorporating blockchain to enable complete visibility and transparency throughout the supply chain, which allows shared access of information on shipments, paperwork, and logistics processes by a number of stakeholders, including shippers, carriers, customs, and port authorities.<sup>327</sup> This active exchange of intelligence with international allies and law enforcement organizations allows the port to improve its situational awareness and identify new threats. In order to combat crime, public and private sector cooperation is essential. Hence, private businesses using the port are urged to follow security procedures and report any unusual activity. The Port of Rotterdam aims to continuously strengthen its security procedures in light of the fact that security threats are dynamic in order to remain ahead of criminal strategies, security methods are routinely reviewed and modified.<sup>328</sup>

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325. "Undermining Criminality - Port of Rotterdam." Port of Rotterdam, n.d. <https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/building-port/safe-port/undermining-criminality>.

326. Ibid.

327. "Port of Rotterdam Introduces Quay Connect Blockchain Technology." Port Technology International, December 24, 2021. <https://www.porttechnology.org/news/port-of-rotterdam-introduces-quay-connect-blockchain-technology/>.

328. "Undermining Criminality - Port of Rotterdam." Port of Rotterdam, n.d. <https://www.portofrotterdam.com/en/building-port/safe-port/undermining-criminality>.

## Questions to Consider:

- How can international law be strengthened to address jurisdictional and legal challenges related to transnational crime at sea, such as piracy, illegal fishing, and maritime terrorism?
- How can countries work together to enhance maritime security and surveillance to detect, deter, and respond to transnational crime at sea effectively?
- What role does technology play in monitoring maritime activities?
- How can the international community cooperate to address the root causes of piracy and armed robbery at sea and prevent such incidents?
- How can countries address human trafficking and smuggling operations that exploit vulnerable migrants and refugees using maritime routes?
- What measures can be implemented to ensure the safety and protection of victims?
- How can port states strengthen their security measures to prevent the entry of illegal goods and enhance cooperation with other countries to combat maritime crime?
- How can regional organizations and alliances promote cooperation and information sharing among coastal states to combat transnational crime at sea effectively?
- What role can private sector entities play in addressing transnational crime at sea, and how can they collaborate with governments and law enforcement agencies?
  - E.g. Shipping companies and fishing fleets
- How do transnational crimes at sea impact international trade and economic stability?
- What collective measures can be taken to secure maritime trade routes and prevent disruptions?

## Tips for Research

1. Begin your research by reading the Background Guide! While it may seem intimidating and lengthy, it is ultimately a tool that can help you and get you started. It is a basic introduction to topics and subtopics which can assist you in producing working papers, speeches, and more.
2. When starting your research, find credible sources such as peer-reviewed articles, UN documents or resolution, legal frameworks, and international laws. Do not feel restricted by what you can and cannot research; instead, concentrate on locating dependable, accurate sources. Use the INTERPOL website, it includes a depository of all INTERPOL initiatives and operations where you can find information pertaining to their respective states' involvement. Send the dias an email and ask if you are stuck or unsure!
3. When drafting position papers, be as specific as you can. Which governing body, statute, or policy do you favor, and why? What advantages do they have for your state?
4. Remember to adhere to your country's foreign policy, values, beliefs, and political ideologies. You have your own set of moral principles and worldviews as you are a unique nation. Choose carefully who you join blocs with because they might disagree with your state's stance, and that's okay!
5. Equity is a key component of our conference. Please ensure equity is upheld every step of your journey throughout the conference as it is a core value. Exercise caution when handling the political attitude of your nation, even if it is somewhat divisive, as we are dealing with very delicate matters. Each one of you plays a significant role in helping UTMUN ensure the comfort of all your delegates!
6. Participate in whichever way you can. MUN is most fun when you participate and engage in discussions, ask questions, pass notes, form blocs, submit working papers, debate, etc. And never be reluctant to get in touch with your dias, we wish to be of assistance in any way we can!

## Key Resources:

### *Topic A: Environmental Crime*

#### **INTERPOL's Project Wisdom**

INTERPOL's Project Wisdom is an initiative focused on improving governance and law enforcement capabilities in order to conserve elephants and rhinoceroses. Its three main objectives include improving political will, departmental support, and skills training for effective wildlife conservation and law enforcement.

#### **International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime (ICWC)**

The ICWC is a collaborative effort to more effectively tackle wildlife and forest crime, various international organizations. The main objective of the group is to improve global coordination and collaboration in order to successfully combat wildlife and forest crime.

#### **UNFF**

The UNFF is an intergovernmental body established by ECOSOC, focused on promoting the sustainable management, conservation, and development of all forests.

#### **UN Global Compact**

The UN Global Compact is a prominent initiative and sustainability framework that was introduced by the organization in 2000. Its goal is to motivate companies and organizations all around the world to adopt sustainable and socially conscious policies and practices that are in line with ten generally recognized principles. These guidelines encompass topics including labor, the environment, human rights, and anti-corruption.

#### **The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)**

TRAFFIC is a non-governmental organization that focuses on tracking and studying the global traffic in wild animals and plants. Established in 1976, it functions as a strategic partnership between the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), to ensure that wildlife trade is legal and sustainable.

## Key Resources:

### **Resolution 73/343 - Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife**

Resolution urging more efforts to combat wildlife trafficking by acknowledging the harm that illegal wildlife trade does to ecosystems, biodiversity, and security. It exhorts members to tighten laws, enforce them, and work together internationally to stop this crime.

### **Resolution 2011/36 - Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses to Wildlife Trafficking**

Resolution emphasizes the importance of addressing wildlife trafficking as a serious crime through cooperation between law enforcement agencies, judicial bodies, and international organizations

### **E/RES/2003/27 - Illicit trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna**

Resolution urges all member states to cooperate with the Secretary-General and relevant UN organizations to prevent, combat, and eliminate trafficking in protected species of wildlife by adopting preventive measures and reviewing their criminal legislation

### ***Topic B: Transnational crime at sea***

#### **International Maritime Bureau (IMB)**

The IMB is a specialized agency under the International Chamber of Commerce focused on eradicating marine crime and advancing security and safety in global shipping. The IMB's main objective is to serve as a focal point for the gathering and sharing of data regarding maritime crimes and occurrences.

#### **UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**

The UNAC is an international treaty designed to confront and fight corruption on a global level. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 2000 and entered into force in December 2005, this treaty is a comprehensive international tool which offers nations a framework for creating and putting into practice anti-corruption laws and regulations.



## Key Resources:

### Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP)

ReCAAP is a regional agreement between governments that strives to advance and strengthen collaboration amongst its member nations in combating and preventing piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia.

### Oceana

An international non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation and protection of oceans, Oceana addresses threats to the health of the ocean ranging from overfishing to habitat destruction. It advocates for policy development at both the international and national level to address IUU fishing.

### United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

OCHA aims to coordinate humanitarian response efforts through the UN system, focusing primarily on assisting victims of natural disasters, armed conflicts, and other emergencies such as human trafficking and smuggling by sea. Their involvement aids refugees and migrants traveling on unsafe vessels across oceans as they provide humanitarian assistance following maritime disasters and displacement due to transnational crimes at sea and on land.

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