



Advancing Environmental Security through Science – Diplomacy – Law – Finance - Education

No. 1 - June 2020

The battle for the planet

By Wouter Veening, President, IES

The world has become an ecological battlefield where large segments of mankind are fighting Mother Nature and her allies.

The former are using chainsaws, bulldozers, asphalt machines, excavators, drill platforms, snares, nets, guns and many other weapons to transform forests into cattle pastures, soybean fields, plantations, to penetrate and open the earth crust for minerals, oil, gas, coal, uranium, lithium and the other so-called rare earths and to cull, catch and poach wild life and fish.

They leave toxic (persistent) chemicals in water, soil and air and pump massive amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and massive amounts of groundwater from the soils.

The concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere warms the world, causes droughts and floods, leads to irreversible sea level rise, and increases the intensity of extreme weather events. This is the climate crisis, which, if unchecked, will make the planet uninhabitable for humanity and many other species of the community of life.

This is one of the ways in which Mother Nature hits back, which she also does by releasing viruses from places where she should have been left alone, causing the pandemics which now dominate the attention of the global community.

Her allies support her with scientific insights on how the natural world works - mapping and forecasting the actual state of the atmosphere, the oceans and the freshwater bodies (hydrosphere), the soils (lithosphere) and the diversity of life (biosphere).



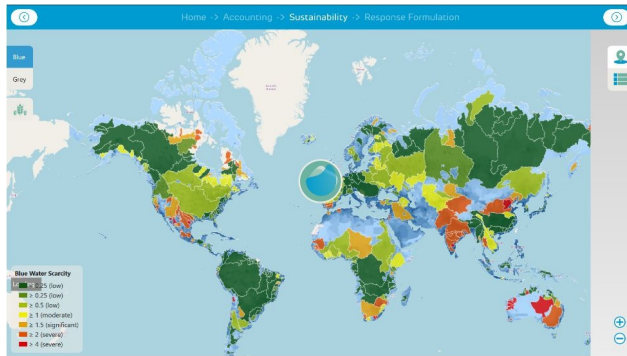
They also design legal arrangements to structure the response of the human society to the challenges to Mother Nature; they actively participate in diplomatic efforts to implement these arrangements in practice, also involving the enlightened military in this.

In addition they promote technological and financial innovation to steer production and consumption patterns towards harmony with nature and they are active in approaching schools and the larger public through the traditional and social media to raise consciousness about the planetary predicament and what can be done about it in daily routines.

It is clear, however, that at this moment, the start of the 2020's, the allies of Mother Nature are losing the battle. Vital ecosystems as the Amazon and the rain forests in Indonesia, Malaysia and New Guinea are being destroyed at a higher tempo than ever before and, were it not due to the Covid-19 pandemic, greenhouse gas emissions would have been the highest to-date.

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New Water Footprint Assessment Tool is Online



By Matt Luna

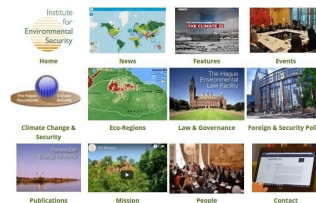
According to the Water Footprint Network [media release](#), "Users can perform more comprehensive evaluations with the redesigned online tool from the Water Footprint Network. This free interactive tool enables development of exact insights and solutions for efficient water management, through use of the latest global scientific data on water related to commodities, crops, geographic areas and water sources".

World Water Day 2020 (22 March) highlights the linkage of water and climate change, and is a key time to relaunch this tool. "A warming climate adds urgency to monitoring water use, as we'll see larger water footprints across sectors. And as water use increases, our supply remains roughly the same, so use of smart approaches with our Assessment Tool facilitates more fair, sustainable and profitable practices for everyone," said Dr. Rick Hogeboom, Executive Director of the Water Footprint Network.

In this article we also feature several other useful on-line tools related to environment and security.

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IES Celebrates 18th Anniversary



The Institute for Environmental Security was established in May 2002 with the mission *"To advance global environmental security by promoting the maintenance of the regenerative capacity of life-supporting ecosystems."*

Today, we continue to work to increase political attention to environmental security as a means to help safeguard essential conditions for peace and sustainable development.

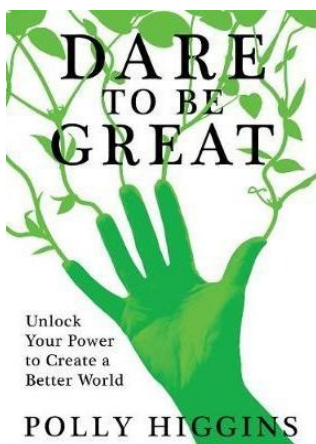
To mark the occasion we are pleased to launch the brand new **IES website** together with **EnviroSecurity News**.
- Ron Kingham, Editor

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Recommended Reading



Dare To Be Great: Unlock Your Power to Create a Better World

Review by Shirleen Chin

The depth one goes when reading **Dare To Be Great** is akin to a guided journey into discovering one's deepest conscience. More importantly, a conscience that is rooted in ecological awareness and our human relationship with Earth. Having known the author, Polly Higgins, it feels almost as if this book was written by premonition; her days were numbered from the time she wrote the first edition in 2014 but yet she imparts an eternal wisdom that is to be her legacy: the campaign to make ecocide an internationally recognised crime. Take a journey through specks of Polly's life and uncover your own potential to make heartfelt decisions about your time on Earth, how to give back to her and join others who are already using their greatness to catalyse change in a planetary system on overdrive and at the brink of irreversible collapse.

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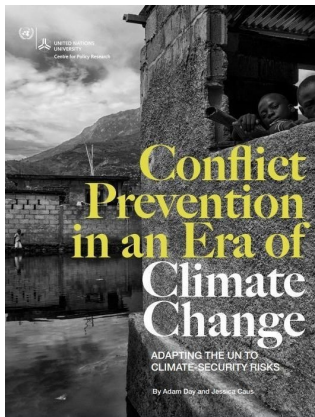


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Wildlife Justice Commission releases new analysis

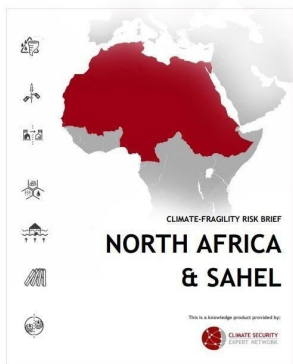
The Wildlife Justice Commission's Intelligence Development Unit has analysed the effect that global measures imposed since January 2020 to contain the spread of COVID-19 are having on wildlife trafficking dynamics. The **new report** concludes that trafficking continues despite restrictions, albeit at a reduced scale, and that high-level criminal networks are adapting to resume operations to previous levels. Crime analysts at the Wildlife Justice Commission's Intelligence Development Unit have assessed the organisation's findings from the trade between January and April 2020 and the reported seizures made during that period to arrive at state of the art intelligence on the criminal dynamics.



Conflict Prevention in an Era of Climate Change: Adapting the UN to Climate-Security Risks

A new report from the **United Nations University - Centre for Policy Research** entitled "**Conflict Prevention in an Era of Climate Change: Adapting the UN to Climate-Security Risks**" says that "Today's violent conflicts are proving deadlier and more difficult to resolve than ever before. Over the past decade, the number of civil wars has nearly tripled, driven by a growth in transnational criminal networks, greater presence of radical groups in many settings and a willingness of international actors to support intra-state conflicts. This, in turn, has contributed to historic levels of conflict-related displacement and far higher numbers of civilians caught up in violent conflict". There is a growing recognition too of the role of climate change in exacerbating conflict risks

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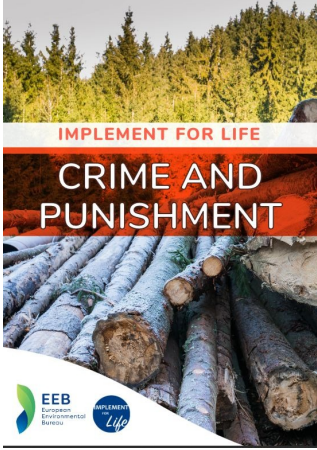


Report highlights climate and security risks in North Africa and the Sahel

A recently updated report on how climate and security risks collide to affect North Africa and the Sahel is now available through the Climate Security Expert Network. The network relaunched the **Climate-Fragility Risk Brief: North Africa & Sahel** on 14 April stating that the region is perhaps "where climate change is most likely to undermine security".

According to the announcement "Author Oli Brown writes that the key risks affecting the region are farmer-herder conflicts, tensions around water allocation and climate-induced migration, and the growth of armed opposition groups—and recommends entry points to take action, such as greater investment in capacity-building"

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258 billion

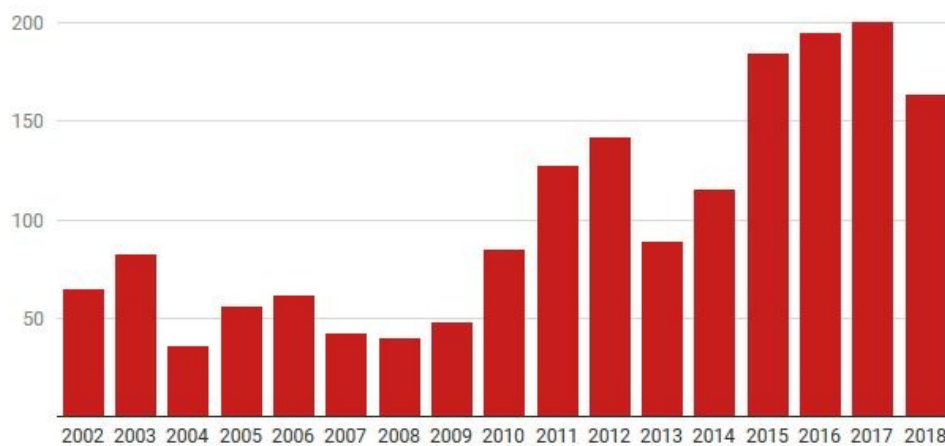
Estimated value in US dollars per year of environmental crime worldwide including illegal logging, mining, waste dumping and illegal wildlife trade – according to a report entitled **'Crime and Punishment'** published on 2 March by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB).

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86

Number of defenders of the environment killed in Mexico since 2012.

Number of environmental deaths recorded each year



Data supplied by Global Witness.

Chart: The Conversation • Source: Global Witness/authors • [Get the data](#)

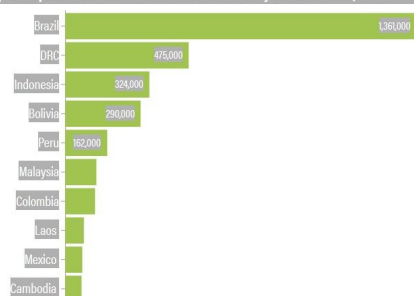
The figure includes at least six environmentalist killed in different Latin American countries since 11 March, the date on which the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 disease a pandemic according to a [report by INFOAMAZONIA](#) on 23 April.

Last year [Global Witness reported](#) that 1,738 people described as environmental defenders were killed between 2002 and 2018, across 50 countries.

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3.8 million

Top 10 Tropical Countries that Lost the Most Primary Forest in 2019 (in hectares)



WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Number of hectares (9.3 million acres) of lost tropical primary forests in 2019 – an area nearly the size of Switzerland constituting some of the most valuable ecosystems on the planet for climate stability and biodiversity conservation. According to a 2 June [report published by Global Forest Watch](#), every 6 seconds in 2019 1 football pitch of tropical primary rainforest was lost.

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Rethinking our Relationship with Nature



The renowned primatologist **Jane Goodall** was interviewed (in English) on the Dutch TV programme **Buitenhof** on 19 April.

Speaking about the Corona health crisis, she said it is a disaster that mankind has brought upon itself.

She said that "This all ties in with climate change, the destruction of the forests, and the pollution of the land. It's all interconnected ... and I just pray and hope that we emerge from this pandemic - as we will, we always do - as better, wiser people".

Looking beyond the current crisis she added that "The best outcome is that we turn the corner and move towards a more rational way of living and reduce our over consumption, try to alleviate poverty and, above all, respect each other, respect nature, and respect the animals. If we do that it will be a better world".

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