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The Dual Face of Corporate Environmental Crimes in Pakistan: Unveiling Threats and Opportunities for a Sustainable Future

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ABSTRACT

The environment plays a vital role in sustaining development, health, food security, and economies. However, the depletion of natural resources across the world has led to a rise in environmental crime, which has now become the fourth-largest crime sector globally. This criminal industry accounts for the theft of natural resources worth up to $258 billion annually, posing a serious threat to the planet's fragility and peace. The UN Security Council has also recognized the severity of environmental crime and its connection to armed groups and terrorists receiving funds from this criminal activity. In Pakistan, the country's constitutional law plays a crucial role in addressing environmental issues and upholding fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. The Lahore High Court set up the Green Benches after the Burbhan Declaration in 2012, which led to the Supreme Court and High Courts' active involvement in addressing environmental issues and complaints. The Supreme Court and High Courts have established a substantial body of environmental jurisprudence in Pakistan, with landmark precedents such as the Shehla Zia and Leghari cases. This study uses a qualitative research methodology to examine environmental crimes in Pakistan. It uses historical and descriptive-analytical tools and primary sources like online resources and print media. The research also examines legislation and achievements related to proposed statutes. The study aims to assess the issue from a Pakistani perspective, comparing various juristic approaches with the judicial mechanism. The qualitative approach combines normative, descriptive, and explanatory-analytical features, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of environmental crimes' consequences. The study highlights deficiencies in environmental crime response due to a lack of knowledge, awareness, data, governance, legislation, collaboration, enforcement capacity, information sharing, and engagement with local communities. Addressing these disparities requires reinstating initiatives, facilitating information exchange, combating environmental crimes, and enhancing environmental legislation across all governance levels.

Keywords: Judicial Activism, Green Benches, Public Interest Environmental Litigation, Sustainable Development Goals

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Introduction:

The global commodity market for carbon trading is presently booming. The total value of carbon pricing systems was just under $50 billion in 2015. Around USD 15 billion was brought in by governments around the world through emissions trading and carbon taxes. Because the product is intangible and the market is still in its early stages, depending on the limited availability of unseen materials, it is susceptible to criminal activities. The trading of forest certificates is another market. These certificates allow landowners to pay for the upkeep of natural vegetation and thus compensate for restoration obligations. With a potential value of $9.2 billion, the forest trading market is the biggest globally. In addition, there are significant dangers linked to fraud and organized crime as these trading systems evolve. To help prevent the abuse of monitoring, it is crucial to provide significant funding to the international and national police community, particularly UNODC and INTERPOL. Results from separate experiments have shown carbon credit schemes with values between tens of millions and hundreds of millions of dollars. Among the many wrongdoings that fall under the umbrella term "corporate environmental crimes" are the following: the use of shell companies as tax havens; double counting; tax fraud; offenses of the internet; the mispricing of capital transfers; hacking; money laundering; financial crimes; phishing; theft; fraudulent activities; and the fraudulent reclaiming of carbon credits.

Methodology:

Given the intricate nature of environmental crimes, this paper will employ a qualitative research methodology. Historical and descriptive-analytical tools are employed in this study. The study will utilize online resources and print media, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, books, research articles, case laws, websites, statutes, conference literature, and precedents, as primary sources of data. The current report will additionally encompass an examination of legislation and accomplishments of the suggested statutes. The proposed objectives will be approached using conventional doctrinal methodology, specifically an analytical and comparative perspective. This approach is chosen due to the availability of adequate and relevant materials in libraries and electronic sources, which serve as secondary sources of data.

This study aims to investigate the theories and practices adopted by developed societies about environmental crimes, along with their judicial and legal concepts and principles. From a Pakistani perspective, these frameworks will function as guiding principles for evaluating the extent of the issue. The examination of different juristic approaches and their comparison with the judicial mechanism of Pakistan is a crucial component in the study of environmental crimes and all environmental statutes. To conduct a study that includes normative, descriptive, and explanatory-analytical features, the researchers have ultimately decided to use the qualitative approach as their chosen research methodology. This methodology facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the implications of environmental crimes for both the researcher and the study participants. The current study's research and investigations have the potential to offer valuable suggestions and recommendations.

Criminal Liability of Corporations – An Environmental Perspective

Corporations are responsible for committing environmental crimes such as fraud, money laundering, unlawful trade, hacking, and tax avoidance. The disruption of legal markets and corporations, which in turn affects stock markets, is caused by these operations, which involve large financial resources. Crimes committed against the environment are frequently used by international organized crime networks as a method of engaging in operations related to money laundering that are derived from human trafficking. The market for carbon trading is undergoing substantial expansion, and it is anticipated that emissions trading and carbon taxes provide around $15 billion in revenue for governments around the world. Due to the intangible nature of the commodity and the fact that the market is still in its early stages, this illegal transaction is susceptible to being exploited by criminals. At a value of $9.2 billion US dollars, the trading of forest certificates constitutes the largest market on a global scale.

Environmental Pollution by Industries

Corporations play a pivotal role in the economic landscape of any nation, contributing significantly to job creation and influencing the quality of life for individuals. Enforcing environmental regulations on corporations is challenging due to the lack of physical and intangible entities that can be held accountable for violations of environmental laws. The primary objective is to enforce criminal responsibility on corporations, but the issue has been exacerbated by larger corporations. The judiciary worldwide has adopted various legal principles, but these principles have yet to be universally applicable. This chapter examines advancements in corporate criminal liability and the indispensability of mens rea in cases involving environmental crime.

Corporations have a diverse history on a global scale, with origins in various theories, customs, laws, concepts, conventions, regulations, and principles. They have been influenced by countries like Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States, and their development has had significant implications for the legal framework in other regions. Corporations initially operated as publicly traded entities but later transitioned into privately held companies, causing significant environmental damage.

Corporations are seen as integral components of the legal system, prioritizing socioeconomic welfare through legal structures that facilitate investments and yield advantages. They play a significant role in providing essential human needs, generating economic wealth, and providing employment opportunities to a significant portion of the population. However, governments have been reluctant to use the law to limit corporate conduct, leading to a free market paradigm in Western governments.

Industrial-induced environmental pollution is a significant issue, with no global organization in place to monitor or document these offenses. Pakistan lacks the necessary statistics to accurately assess the amount of pollution produced by industrial companies. Potential sources of pollution in Pakistan include various industries, including the Caustic Soda Industry, Oil Refinery, Sugar Industry, Cotton Textile Industries, Thermal Power Plants, Cement Plants, Synthetic Rubber and Natural Rubber, Fertilizer Industry, Petrochemicals, Pesticide Manufacturing, and Pharmaceuticals.

The ban on the co-disposal of hazardous wastes has led to changes in the handling of non-hazardous waste, but there are challenges in addressing the issue. The exact amount of illegally disposed hazardous waste remains unknown, but some have been lost or escaped from the system.

The Problem of Huge Corporations and Globalization

The increasing globalization and the rise of large corporations pose challenges to the regulation of these entities. Large corporations have budgets ten times larger than smaller developing nations, making it difficult to secure convictions for crimes. Prosecutions must demonstrate multiple agents have committed all necessary elements of the offenses, which can be complicated when the mens rea is the fundamental element of the crime.

Corporate Homicide

Explaining corporate homicide or manslaughter is more challenging, as it raises the question of whether these corporations should face charges of corporate manslaughter and what constitutes the appropriate grounds for prosecution. In cases where there is insufficient evidence to establish the responsibility of identified individuals, it is possible to be legally found guilty of manslaughter based on gross negligence.

Criminal Liability on Corporations of Pakistan for Environmental Crimes

In Pakistan, the criminal justice system is an inadequate mechanism for exerting social control, with the education system, family, and community playing a crucial role in preventing crime. The lack of effective social governance in Pakistan makes it difficult to hold corporations accountable for environmental crimes.

The development of corporate criminal law has not significantly changed over the last century, and recent scandals bear striking resemblance to those encountered in the early 1990s. A significant transformation in the application of criminal law to corporations is needed, replacing vicarious liability with a corporate liability model that uses objective assessments of fault.

Are the Corporations Playing Games – Issue of Greenwashing?

Corporate greenwashing is a strategy used by environmental activists and experts to expose corporations' dirty game, where they disguise their environmental violations as environmental concerns. This involves companies claiming to be the largest environmental rescuers with money invested in environmental protection media campaigns. Greenwashing is a strategy used to deceive authorities and the public by making misleading claims about environmentally beneficial initiatives.

Money laundering from environmental crimes

Environmental crimes are estimated to be the most valuable profit-generating corporate crimes globally, with annual illicit earnings ranging from $110 to $281 billion. These crimes have far-reaching consequences for the environment, public health, human security, social and economic progress, and promoting corruption. The government's efforts to detect or prevent illicit financial flow have been insufficient, and attention to environmental crime in financial investigations and risk assessments has been restricted thus far.

Financial Flow from Legal and Illegal Trade For Waste, Mining and Logging

Criminals sometimes use legal and regularised markets for waste management, lawful logging, mining, high-quality metals, and stones to launder illegally obtained items and money. International treaties have been signed to prevent illegal trade and money laundering in protected metals, stones, flora and fauna, and toxic waste.

Global Estimates of Financial Flows

Determining the precise size of illegal revenues from environmental crimes is challenging due to discrepancies in national and regional definitions of environmental crime. Most of the revenues, especially from illegal logging and mining, are expected to end up in the international banking system. These illicit funds can then be used to finance other criminal activities, posing a significant threat to global security and sustainability. Efforts to combat this issue include increased cooperation between law enforcement agencies and financial institutions to track and seize illegal proceeds. This makes it difficult to track and trace the exact flow of funds from these illicit activities. Additionally, increased collaboration between law enforcement agencies and financial institutions is crucial in detecting and preventing money laundering in the environmental sector.

Characteristics of Illegal Financial Flows in Waste Trafficking

Waste trafficking may generate transnational, regional, or domestic revenue. They are transnational when hazardous or non-compliant trash containers are illegally transported, misclassified as recycled, and often supplied to emerging, poor, or middle-income nations. Sometimes waste never leaves a territory or jurisdiction and is illegally disposed of or maintained. Thus, trash trafficking and its cash flows seem regional, unlike illicit logging and mining. Like other crimes, waste trafficking profits are often combined with legal waste trading. Large-scale criminal groups must also move massive amounts of physical goods. Waste trafficking causes disruptions. Waste has a negative value, unlike mining or forestry waste. This duty allows companies to dispose of waste easily and economically. This gives criminal groups more customers and prospects. States rarely want to stop illicit waste trafficking since there are few financial incentives and governments bear potentially high repatriation costs. While trash trading may be harder to examine and detect by money movements, concurrent financial investigations are crucial to uncovering bigger criminal networks. Classifying trash like electronics as second-hand products and dumping or exporting it to destination countries where all shipping containers sit indefinitely without collection or disposal is one way to bypass waste limits. Domestic waste is rarely exported, but it is often mixed with hazardous material and discarded locally due to insufficient inspections. Some legal garbage traders import more waste than their licensing allows and dispose of or export it. Additionally, some authorized enterprises may use illegal trash disposal to save money. Instead of paying for legal garbage disposal, the company's profits rise. While waste's characteristics may present challenges [If a company commits a serious offense by illegally disposing or treating waste, any proceeds generated for this contract would be criminal gains, which may need to be concealed or laundered.], countries should investigate and prosecute money laundering and related crimes.

Characteristics of Illegal Financial Flows in Illegal Mining and Illegal Logging

Contrary to waste trafficking, illicit mining, and logging generate similar profits. Criminals in various sectors employ similar methods to hide money from other crimes. This involves using informal and official financial sectors, sending money through several accounts and financial institutions, and using intermediates who may or may not be involved in the initial crime. The idea is to create as many layers as possible between environmental crimes and account holders where assets are placed once illegal goods are sold. Resource exploitation and concession license issuance regulations in resource-rich nations can be opaque and unscrupulous. These crimes often occur in rural areas with minimal police observation and enforcement. Criminals may find it easier to hide unlawful labor smuggling and money couriers in border areas. Organized networks use crooked customs officers or porous border crossings to export goods. Thus, concession licenses are granted to close associates in a liberal environment. These unscrupulous public officials enable complex money laundering operations. Thus, it is crucial to identify true beneficial owners and screen for politically exposed individuals.[FATF partners including the World Bank have developed recommendations to increase risk assessments and PEP screening to combat environmental and wildlife crime in resource-rich regions. Offshore jurisdictions with weaker anti-crime laws attract criminals, as in other areas. This arbitrage helps environmental criminals hide payments and advantages. Third countries, notably offshore financial centers, shift the funds to hide the beneficial owners. All illicit actors take advantage of poor communication between countries and weaker safeguards to identify beneficial owners and questionable actions. Comingling makes it difficult to distinguish between legitimate and unlawful financial flow, and placing funds in a jurisdiction other than the one where the underlying crimes were committed makes identification and prosecution harder and facilitates tax evasion.

This investigation found convergence in environmental and other crime financial flows, as well as specialized and trained networks and supply chains. Illicit mining in Pakistan is trafficked into neighboring nations for shipment to Middle Eastern refiners or smuggling in Asia. The middleman would pay the smuggler or a Middle Eastern refiner after the substance was delivered. Gold from Peru and Venezuela moves via adjacent countries in South America or the Caribbean Basin, following similar patterns. Criminals that smuggle to Asia often use hawala. Regardless of the product, refiners may not know it was illegal. This example highlights gold market flows, but many networks foster crime. Other valuable metals like copper, coltan, and cobalt may follow similar paths. Keep in mind that precious stones and metals are moved legally. However, observed routes for:].

Illicit logging and mining sometimes involve capital migration into rural areas with cash-based economies rather than urban financial centers. This contrasts official or foreign direct investment financial flows and illicit forestry and mining labor and equipment payments. This may cause large financial institutions to rurally integrate with regional financial institutions and then use unregulated and regulated money transfer services to compensate workers in rural areas without bank accounts and to buy tools for extraction and transportation out of the rural zone. Those hired to perform illegal logging or mining can be paid in cash or sent money to a third party via a criminal network.

The mining sector seems to believe that small-scale miners are the riskiest and have trouble joining formal banks. This allows illicit or informal players to enter the mining sector and finance to take over or extort small-scale operations, that may have no other funding source. It is important to emphasize that large-scale mining may pose similar but distinct risks. Large mining operations are more likely to commit corruption, extract resources from unlawful concessions, and commit tax fraud through complex corporate structures in countries other than the parent firm.

Countries relied on offshore front businesses, third-party transactions, and complicit middlemen to hide and launder illicit forestry and mining earnings. Regional financial centers around the world appear to have a key role in making funds available for illicit operations and laundering the proceeds of environmental crimes due to the irregular flow of finance. They may broker trades, especially for mining commodities, to enable comingling. Countries did not submit new financial technology cases. However, the absence of case evidence does not mean thieves are not using new technology.

Use of Front Companies to Mix Legal and Illegal Proceeds

Typically, criminals employ front corporations to blend the proceeds from unlawful corporate environmental operations with legitimate business funds. These front firms were often linked to natural resource markets and engaged in numerous transactions with minimal individual profit margins. The level of sophistication of these front organizations varied, ranging from simple schemes with easily noticeable defects to highly advanced firms with extensive genuine operations. This could provide challenges for law enforcement and the economic sector in distinguishing between lawful and unlawful activities.

Occasionally, wrongdoers employed front enterprises in alternative cash-intensive sectors that had no connection to natural resources. A common characteristic is that these front organizations often have connections with the import-export industry, which allows them to create legitimate invoices and payments to suppliers. Likewise, when it comes to unlawful mining and illegal logging, these deceptive companies are typically located in remote regions.

Hide Beneficial Owners – use of Shell Companies

Instances demonstrate that, alongside front companies, criminals often employ shell organizations to assume the identity of legitimate services and payments linked to corporate environmental crimes through the process of money laundering. For instance, in Italy, a criminal syndicate established a garbage management company that lacked any discernible legitimate business operations. They employed offshore shell companies to facilitate the movement of funds back and forth, disguising it as invoicing, to carry out their illicit disposal of garbage. This strategy highlights the importance of engaging with regulatory authorities who act as gatekeepers, as well as identifying the specific beneficial owners of related enterprises. In 2016, a leak of 11.6 million papers to a German news agency exposed information regarding the ownership of up to 214,000 shell firms managed by a legal company in Panama. Politicians, businessmen, autocrats, and terrorists from around the world utilize shell corporations to evade taxes and engage in various illicit activities. This information is sourced from the Süddeutsche Zeitung's article 'About the Panama Papers' (2018). The item titled "The secrets of dirty money" may be accessed at the following link: The article was accessed on 12 March 2023.

Reliance upon Trade Base Fraud and Money Laundering

One common characteristic of all environmental crimes is their reliance on trade-based fraud to conceal the movement of money across international borders. It encompasses the act of fabricating documents, particularly about the import and export of goods, as well as the creation of counterfeit invoices and business transactions to justify the transfer of funds over international boundaries. Corporate environmental crimes may encompass activities such as mislabeling or deliberately concealing the true value.

Due to the blending of legitimate and illegal goods in environmental crimes, it can be challenging to distinguish between money laundering through trade and fraud through trade. Trade-based fraud is more likely to occur when individuals or organizations try to hide the origins of illegally obtained goods by transferring them through transit nations and mixing them with legally protected and sourced things. The primary objective of trade-based money laundering is to exploit the trading system to launder illicit gains. The intricate nature of the industry and the volume of transactions can provide criminals with the opportunity to exploit trade as a disguise for transferring money over international borders.

Utilization of Regional and International Financial Sectors

Based on the results of this study, criminals exploit the lawful financial system to launder proceeds obtained from environmental crimes. The revenue includes income from third-party wire transfers that are disguised as purchases for items and services, as well as from investments and sponsorship. Commodities trading and trade finance firms located worldwide seem to have a crucial function due to the irregular money flows associated with regional finance centers for environmental crimes. Some investments were made for shell businesses that were officially registered with the national government, but these businesses did not engage in significant economic activity. This allowed the true beneficial ownership to be further concealed. Money or value transfer services (MVTS) are financial services that involve accepting cash, cheques, or other monetary instruments and paying a corresponding sum to a beneficiary through communication, transfer, or a clearing network belonging to the MVTS provider. This role is similar to other financial crimes. Transactions conducted through these services may entail multiple intermediaries and a final payment to a third party. They can also be used to facilitate environmental crime laundering, particularly in the case of unlawful mining. These patterns often have a regional scope and reflect local informal channels of transfer.

Awareness and Understanding of Money Laundering Risks

Governments must enhance their knowledge of the money laundering concerns associated with environmental crimes. Most jurisdictions that have addressed the issue of money laundering have primarily focused on environmental crimes. However, fewer nations have taken into account the money laundering risks associated with illegal trading in waste, mining, wildlife, logging, and other related activities. The majority of states that consider themselves as source countries for environmental crimes are located in Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa, Central and South America, and Southeast Asia. Some governments erroneously assume that the absence of domestic natural resources and environmental crimes means there is no need to assess potential money laundering risks associated with such crimes. Due to this widespread misconception on the level of danger, environmental offenses are now considered to be of lower risk compared to other types of serious and organized crimes. Consequently, the allocation of resources and coordination amongst agencies to address these crimes is negatively affected. Although many governments acknowledge the geographical and overall hazards associated with environmental crimes, a major difficulty is the insufficient and inaccurate data on unlawful financial flows related to these crimes, which hampers precise risk assessments.

Challenges in Disrupting Legal Framework

This study found several gaps in the legal frameworks for environmental crimes and money laundering across countries, restricting domestic and international action to these crimes. Most countries have criminalized at least some environmental crimes, such as illegal exploitation of natural resources or logging. In some nations, criminal offenses are carefully defined to match the true scope of environmental crime, restricting how governments may respond and not include trafficking, importing, or exporting natural resources. Despite inadequacies in predicate offense regulatory regimes. Money laundering for a range of environmental offenses has been criminalized in many nations because of the overall criminal strategy, not because of danger. In over half of the world, this is the case. All criminal approaches consider finance-generating offenses, including environmental crimes with a penalty beyond a particular threshold, predicate offenses to money laundering. Based on the instances studied for this report, few governments prosecute money laundering charges using linked crimes that support environmental crimes (e.g., fraud, corruption, smuggling, theft). Countries without mining reserves did not criminalize illegal mining, but this can limit the scope of associated money laundering investigations and support for countries when the funds are located in countries where the environmental infringement occurred elsewhere, especially where dual criminality standards apply. Even in locations with full statutory measures, these offenses have different consequences. Some countries agreed that environmental crime punishments in their region are greatly inadequate and disproportionate to criminal profits and environmental harm. A wide range of environmental offenses may fall below certain limits to be considered money laundering and money production crimes. Criminals view environmental crimes as low-risk, highreward due to minimal punishments. Environmental protection policy rarely addresses economic crime. However, the massive environmental damage and illicit gains from such crimes highlight the necessity of anti-money laundering in addressing environmental crimes. The legislative and judicial context for environmental crimes varies globally. Criminal networks utilize lax legal and operational restrictions to exploit natural resources and transfer illicit riches across borders. Poor law in certain nations creates a vicious cycle in which governments lose tax money, making it harder to fight crime.

Challenges in Disrupting Domestic Coordination

Most countries struggle to combat money laundering from environmental crimes due to a lack of collaboration between anti-money laundering authorities and environmental crime and protection agencies. The government and other relevant officials must have effective domestic procedures to collaborate, coordinate, and disseminate information to fight domestic money laundering. However, environmental crimes often include entities outside of anti-money laundering organizations, requiring countries to develop cooperation channels. These authorities oversee environmental crime and protection resource specialists, licensing, and monitoring. The unique and specialized nature of environmental crime detection and investigation contributes to this issue.

Many states' environmental officials are the main environmental crime fighters. These institutions know environmental issues, but they often lack the authority to uncover and thwart complex organized crime operations. Environmental agencies, unlike other law enforcement partners, lack the means and abilities to investigate financial matters, therefore vital financial evidence may be missed. However, traditional anti-money laundering authorities like financial intelligence units and law enforcement rarely work with environmental agencies to combat environmental crimes.

Challenges in Disrupting Detection and Investigation of Money Laundering

Competent authorities must correctly use financial intelligence and other relevant information to help financial investigations and prosecute offenders to detect and prevent money laundering. Most countries have few financial probes for environmental violations. Inadequate detection capacity by appropriate agencies contributes to this. Country example Pakistan reported a few suspicious environmental crime transaction reports, showing national authorities or reporting entities estimate risk. Less than 1% of suspicious transaction reports with the highest deforestation rates were linked to illegal logging and land clearing between 2015 and 2019. Pakistan reported 0.04% of suspicious behavior from 2019 to 2020 as environmental crime. Between 2018 and 2020, environmental crime cases under investigation increased tenfold.

According to Pakistani consultations, most connected agencies have not developed training, typologies, red flags, or analysis methods to identify corporate environmental crimes' financial operations. Corporate institutions reported a lack of input from financial intelligence units and demands for information from other competent and reliable authorities, which could mean that suspicious transaction reports linked to environmental crimes are not given as much attention as fraud, human and drug trafficking, etc. Governments often set up hotlines or direct contact points for financial institutions in sensitive industries or ML and financial crime priorities. Not so for environmental crime in most countries.

Challenges in Disrupting Effective International Cooperation

Environmental crimes frequently result in global financial transactions. Criminal syndicates will attempt to exploit the absence of cooperation across nations. These networks will attempt to transport money or goods via nations where authorities have little practical collaboration and communication. The first investigation frequently veered off track due to a dearth of collaboration with foreign counterparts once the monies had been transferred elsewhere. The intricate movement of funds across international borders through transit nations, as well as via offshore financial entities using both legal and informal channels, highlights the challenge of identifying and pursuing these transactions.

Recommendations

International and national collaboration is needed for analysis, information, enforcement, restoration, and prevention of environmental crimes. Transnational collaboration, information sharing, and UN consensus are essential for environmental crimes. Additionally, it requires unity of effort and leadership in precise and focused national strategies for implementation and coordination. This requires extreme national engagement with a leading agency and comprehensive cooperation and coordination with other relevant agencies. Finally, it must enhance governmental institutions, boost economic incentives, and promote awareness. With donor groups' full cooperation, a focal person in the nation should organize specific events and activities for engagement and dedication.

Reduce peace and security threats

In sanctions councils and peacekeeping committees across the UN, strengthening information analysis, sharing, and collection on natural resource misuse and security informs a comprehensive response to secure peace and sustainable development. Interpol collaboration officers are also included in peacekeeping.

Rule of law

The global community should recognize and deal with environmental crimes as the biggest threat to peace, security, and sustainable development by strengthening environmental laws on all levels to stop secure havens and offshore tax havens, implement deterring penalties, improve and increase national and international legislation, improve sanctions and substantial punishments, technical assistance, and capacity development for implementation.

Leadership

Governments must create cross-national sectorial plans and central collaboration with unity of effort and command and relevant UN entities like Interpol and other international agreement institutions and bodies to combat transnationally organized environmental criminal groups.

Financial aid

Calling on the international community for development to address and recognize environmental crimes as a serious threat to sustainable development and increasing official development assistance for judicial reform and governance, including environmental crime prevention. This must build capacity and provide technological assistance to global, national, and regional environmental crime law implementation agencies, particularly in fragile and developing countries, for interagency coordination, prosecution, information, analysis, enforcement, and judiciary.

Increase economic incentives, institution strength, and consumer awareness. Planning for alternative economic incentives, consumer knowledge, and livelihoods must be coordinated with importing country enforcement. Behavioral change and communications conferences that address all aspects of this illegal trade must identify optimal strategies to reduce demand.

Conclusion

Corporate environmental crime is a severe and growing threat to environmental protection, public health, economic development, peace and security. The study finds that environmental crimes such as illegal logging, illegal mining, trafficking of waste, pollution and fraudulent carbon and environmental schemes are not just environmental violations but often linked to organised crime, corruption, money laundering, trade-based fraud, shell companies and illicit financial flows. In Pakistan, weak legislation, weak institutional capacity, insufficient data and awareness, limited financial investigation, poor interagency coordination and ineffective national and international sharing of information continue to hinder the effective prevention and prosecution of such crimes. The current system thus requires a more robust and coordinated approach to corporate criminal culpability and environmental enforcement. Environmental crimes should be recognised as serious economic and organised crimes, with appropriate and dissuasive penalties, effective mechanisms to identify beneficial ownership and trace illicit financial flows and greater integration between environmental agencies, law-enforcement authorities, financial intelligence units and judicial institutions. On the international level, it is necessary to improve co-operation through information exchange, joint investigations, technical support and co-operation with such institutions as INTERPOL and relevant United Nations entities. At the domestic level Pakistan should improve environmental legislation and enforcement procedures, build specialised investigative and prosecution ability, enhance institutional co-ordination and encourage public and consumer awareness. Ultimately, combating corporate environmental crime calls for a holistic strategy that includes the rule of law, effective corporate accountability, financial oversight, institutional leadership, international cooperation, and sustainable economic incentives. These actions are vital for protecting Pakistan’s environment and natural resources, and for promoting sustainable development, good governance and long-term peace and security.

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Ethical Statement

Ethical approval was not required because this study is based exclusively on publicly available legal documents, judicial decisions, treaties, and published literature and did not involve human participants, animals, or confidential data.

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