



**DIGITAL TOOLKIT**

# Ecocide doesn't belong in our future



Young generations, though least responsible, are set to feel the greatest impacts of the climate and ecological crisis we face.

**But as young people, we refuse to simply be victims of environmental breakdown. We are critical drivers of urgency, solutions, and hope.**

To guarantee a genuinely sustainable future for generations to come, we need to prevent and criminalise the most serious harms to the natural world upon which we all rely.

Youth for Ecocide Law (Y4EL) advocates for the inclusion of the crime of ecocide in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Let's bring our voices together and tell everyone about ecocide law. The greater the awareness, the more people using the word 'ecocide', the more governments will see that it's time to make it a crime.

Whoever you are - climate justice organiser, a young professional, a student or simply a young person worried about your future - you can play a key part in this rapidly growing movement.

**This toolkit will give you everything you need to effectively spread the word about ecocide law.**





“If our laws do not create structures  
and spaces for environmental rights,  
then what will?”

**Terese**  
Singapore



# What is ecocide?

Ecocide is broadly understood to mean mass damage and destruction of ecosystems – severe harm to nature which is widespread or long-term.

## EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES THAT COULD LEAD TO ECOCIDE:



OCEAN DAMAGE



LAND & WATER  
CONTAMINATION



DEFORESTATION



AIR POLLUTION

## LEGAL DEFINITION

In 2021, an independent expert panel, convened by The Stop Ecocide Foundation, announced the legal definition of ecocide:

“unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.”

[Learn more](#)

# Let's make ecocide an international crime

Protecting our future on Earth means stopping the mass damage and destruction of ecosystems taking place globally. This serious harm to nature is increasingly known as ecocide.

**And right now, in most of the world, no-one is held responsible. It's time to change the rules.**

**It's time to make ecocide an international crime.**

Together with lawyers, diplomats and civil society, we work towards amending the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to include a crime of Ecocide.

By adding Ecocide to this list, we send a powerful message to the world - and especially to key decision makers - that severe harm to nature is both legally and morally unacceptable.

## Crimes tried by the International Criminal Court:

- ✓ Genocide
- ✓ War crimes
- ✓ Crimes against humanity
- ✓ Crimes of aggression
- ✗ **Ecocide**



“Everyone, and especially those in positions of power must ask themselves what they can do to counter ecocide.”

**Léa Weimann**

Scotland



# How will we make it happen?

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) can be amended to add a fifth crime: Ecocide.

## Step 1

One of the 123 member states proposes adding 'ecocide' to the list of crimes.

## Step 3

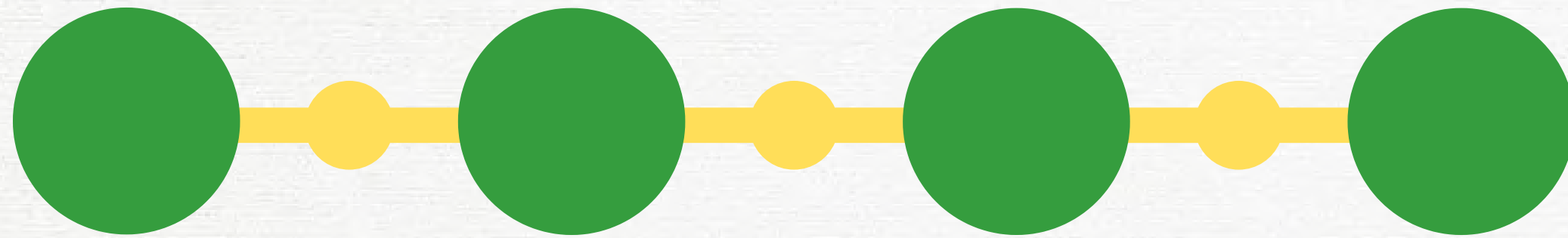
A special meeting takes place to discuss the final text. If two thirds of the states vote in favour, the law is adopted.

## Step 2

At the next annual assembly, a majority of states must vote in favour of making this addition eligible.

## Step 4

States can then ratify (officially agree), and must enforce the law in their own country one year later.



# Who supports ecocide law?



**Xiye Bastida**  
Co-founder of Re-Earth Initiative



**Greta Thunberg**  
Environmental activist



**Cara Delevingne**  
Environmentalist, Model, Activist



**Anuna de Wever**  
Belgian climate activist



**Robert,**  
Children's Climate Champion



**Saoirse Exton**  
Fridays for Future Ireland



**Josh Oxby**  
UN-SDG Advisor



**Sophia Kianni**  
UN adviser | Founder Climate Cardinals



**Luisa Neubauer**  
German climate activist



**Vanessa Nakate**  
UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador





"When I think of Ecocide, I think of the birds, the monkeys, the giraffes and elephants that feed from the trees. Cutting down those trees denies all these creatures a home - that is ecocide."

**Debbie**  
Kenya

# Endorsing partners



# Act now



**JOIN YOUTH FOR  
ECOCIDE LAW**



**SIGN THE PETITION  
URGING GOVERNMENTS TO  
SUPPORT ECOCIDE LAW**



**TELL EVERYONE  
ABOUT ECOCIDE LAW**





*“We must change the law  
to protect the Earth.”*

**Samuel Mue**

Kenya



# Youth for Ecocide Law

Youth for Ecocide Law was founded in 2021, in response to growing frustration among global youth over the lack of action to address these crises. We call for clear legal guardrails to hold political and corporate decision-makers accountable when they cause severe and widespread or long-term harm to our futures.

The Y4EL network was officially founded around the Stockholm+50 International Meeting, where The Global Youth Position Paper for S+50 included a call to: “Recognize large scale environmental destruction, ecocide, as a punishable crime in domestic laws and in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.”

Since then, Y4EL has grown exponentially. We represent the youth constituency within an intergenerational, global movement to criminalize ecocide.

Our ambitions are to:

- empower youth voices in the environmental movement;
- build bridges between civil society, young people, the UN policy process, corporate decision-making, and government policy;
- promote intergenerational respect.

Our network meets monthly to discuss ecocide law, build capacity, organise mobilisations, plan events, and more!

**Young people need to lead the way, because it is our future that hangs in the balance at high-level environmental decision-making tables.**

**Thus, we call upon all governments to support the implementation of an international ecocide law.**



"Ecocide Law could be the crucial turning point towards a better, brighter future for all."

**Tova Lindqvist**  
Sweden





# Amplify

the call to stop ecocide



# Key messages

## SUPPORT FOR ECOCIDE LAW IS GROWING FAST



- There are four crimes currently recognised by International Criminal Court: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes + crimes of aggression. We're working to add a 5th: ecocide
- Ecocide law will support every environmental campaign on the planet
- Ecocide law, like all criminal law, is about prevention, not punishment. Murder isn't a crime to punish murderers, it's a crime to stop people committing murder.
- Interest in criminalising ecocide is now a matter of public record at parliamentary and/or government level in at least 37 countries.
- In 2023 alone, ecocide bills have been proposed or are progressing in Belgium, the Netherlands, Scotland, Mexico, Brazil, Italy and Spain (Catalunya)
- Ecocide Law is good for business. It will bring clarity, redirecting resources and talent away from harmful practices and towards regenerative business models that work in harmony with nature.



“



"We cannot talk about sustainable peace or the respect of human rights if we don't have environmental justice."

**Dalia Fernanda  
Márquez Añez**  
Venezuela

# Outcomes

## 5 EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF ECOCIDE LAW:



### SYSTEMIC CHANGE

It will create systemic change, putting the responsibility on high-level decision-makers rather than on citizens.



### PROTECTIVE FRAMEWORK

Multinationals and countries will have no other choice - they will be guided to do the right thing and change their practices.



### HEALTHY INNOVATION

It will stimulate innovation in a positive direction in all sectors.



### POSITIVE INVESTMENT

Banks and investors will move investment to companies which put people and planet first.



### TRANSFORM RELATIONSHIP

It will shift cultural assumptions and transform our understanding of our relationship with nature.

# Dos and Don'ts

## when talking about ecocide

### DO:

- **Keep it simple:** Explain the simple and doable solution and that it is on its way to happening.
- **Empower listeners:** Ecocide law is a no brainer; something that everyone can get behind. Provide clear call-to-actions to help people act.
- **Focus on the outcomes:** Help people picture what a world with ecocide law could look like and the benefits for everyone.
- **Look for common grounds:** Identify what your audience cares about to make the case for ecocide law.
- **Demonstrate existing support:** Knowing people like them are already supporting will make individual actions more worthwhile.
- **Use SEI's resources:** We have plenty of resources to help you learn about ecocide and feel confident to amplify our work.

### DON'T:

- **Shame or point fingers:** We need to take everyone along with us and not leave anyone behind.
- **Claim something is an ecocide:** If you'd like to provide a specific example, suggest that it could be considered an ecocide. It is up to the courts to decide along with the usual in-depth evidence-based procedure of any criminal case.
- **Be negative:** Avoid using depressing messages, fear and doom. Don't inundate social media with posts about destruction; there are many other organisations that do this. Instead, focus on the role that ecocide law can play in preventing further destruction.
- **Use jargony language:** To take anyone on board we need to make sure everyone can understand and engage with the topic of ecocide law.
- **Try and remember everything:** You don't have to know absolutely everything. Communicate the information that most resonates with you and make sure you have an accurate and up-to-date overview.



“I support the Stop Ecocide movement. Our planet is not a commodity. It’s time to recognize our interconnectedness with nature and take responsibility for protecting it”

**Laila Martins**  
Germany

# Spread the word



'Ecocide' is a powerful word and concept. We're working to amplify its global recognition and use.

Public support is crucial to gathering momentum for this simple, yet powerful change in the law. The greater the awareness, the more people using the word 'ecocide', the more governments will see that it's time to make it a crime.

## So, help us tell everyone about ecocide law!

- Post about ecocide law; we have prepared posts and visuals for you to use on your own channels. You are also more than welcome to create your own content.
- Tag Youth for Ecocide Law in your posts and we will share whenever possible.
- Refer to our FAQ for commonly asked questions and engage with your community.
- Use the following hashtags: #StopEcocide #Y4EL

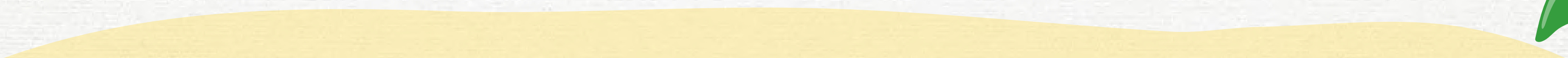
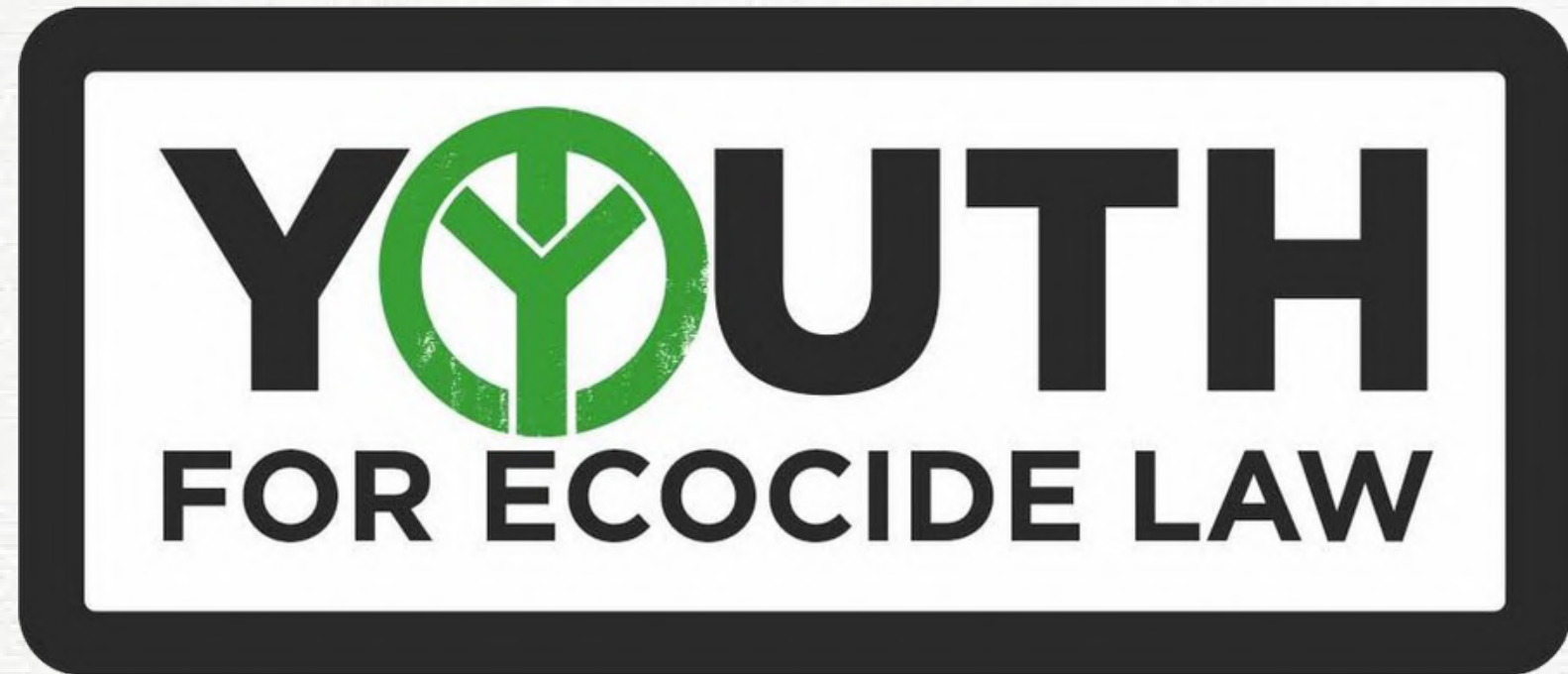
## Follow us on social media:



# Logos



Download them [here](#)





“I believe that an international crime of Ecocide is one of the most tangible and meaningful ways to begin to address the huge issues we are facing as a planet”

**Jamie Hunter**

Canada



# Social media assets

Download them [here](#)





# Print materials

Download them [here](#)



**EARTH**  
PROTECTOR





“Let’s reclaim our future, rewrite our history & renew hope for a liveable planet.”

**Amalie Wilkinson**  
Canada



THEME	POST
<b>GENERAL</b>	<p>The 4 crimes currently recognised by @IntlCrimCourt: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes + crimes of aggression.</p> <p>We're working to add a 5th: #ecocide You can help! Sign our international petition today: <a href="https://www.stopecocide.earth/become">https://www.stopecocide.earth/become</a></p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>
<b>GENERAL</b>	<p>We're working to create an international crime of #Ecocide - a law that makes it a criminal offence to wilfully harm nature.</p> <p>Want to get involved? :writing_hand: Sign the international petition today &amp; make your voice heard: <a href="https://www.stopecocide.earth/become">https://www.stopecocide.earth/become</a> #StopEcocide #EndEcocide</p>
<b>GENERATIONAL JUSTICE</b>	<p>Young generations, though least responsible, are set to feel the greatest impacts of the #ClimateCrisis. We refuse to simply be victims. We are drivers of solutions + hope.</p> <p>We want to see #ecocide recognised as an international crime: <a href="https://www.stopecocide.earth/become">https://www.stopecocide.earth/become</a></p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>
<b>CLIMATE CHANGE</b>	<p>#Ecocide is a #ClimateChange issue.</p> <p>If we are to avert climate breakdown, we cannot continue to destroy ecosystems, such as primary rainforests, that act as vital carbon sinks. YOU can help: <a href="https://stopecocide.earth/act-now">https://stopecocide.earth/act-now</a> #StopEcocide</p>

THEME	POST
<b>BUSINESS</b>	<p>#EcocideLaw will redirect resources + talent away from harmful practices &amp; towards business models that work in harmony with nature.</p> <p>Your business can be part of this positive change: <a href="https://stopecocide.earth/business">https://stopecocide.earth/business</a></p> <p>Favourite sustainable business? Share this post w/ them!</p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>
<b>OCEAN</b>	<p>Wetlands, rivers, lakes, coastal estuaries, the ocean... #water is essential to life, yet we continue to destroy these precious ecosystems on which we rely. It's time to take action.</p> <p>You CAN make a difference - sign our open letter today: <a href="https://www.stopecocide.earth/ocean-for-ecocide-law">https://www.stopecocide.earth/ocean-for-ecocide-law</a></p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>
<b>FARMING/FOOD</b>	<p>Establishing an international crime of #ecocide will set parameters to deter + prevent the worst harms to nature + level the playing field for regenerative approaches to agriculture.</p> <p>Find out more + sign our Farming &amp; Land open letter: <a href="https://www.stopecocide.earth/farming-and-land">https://www.stopecocide.earth/farming-and-land</a></p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>
<b>EARTH PROTECTORS</b>	<p>Signed up to be an #EarthProtector? 22k+ others have!</p> <p>Earth Protectors contribute to a ring-fenced fund that provides expert legal assistance to climate vulnerable states advocating for the advancement of #ecocidelaw: <a href="https://stopecocide.earth/become">https://stopecocide.earth/become</a></p> <p>#StopEcocide</p>



“As we advocate for youth engagement in Ecocide law, the youth too need to step forward, show up & show them!”

**Yasin**

# How to answer common questions about ecocide

## WHAT DOES ECOCIDE MEAN?

Ecocide is broadly understood to mean mass damage and destruction of ecosystems – severe harm to nature which is widespread or long-term. For example: ocean damage, deforestation, land and water contamination, air pollution.

The legal definition of ecocide is “unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.”

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

One or several Head(s) of State must propose an ecocide amendment to the Rome Statute, governing document of the International Criminal Court. This amendment must be submitted at least 3 months before a meeting of the States Parties to the Rome Statute (usually the Assembly, held every December in The Hague, Netherlands and sometimes at the UN in New York). A simple majority at that meeting enables the amendment to enter into consideration.

A Crime Review Conference may then be convened, or negotiation may progress via formal and informal discussion between representatives of States Parties. With the agreement of at least 2/3 of member states (currently 82 out of 123) the amendment can be adopted into the Statute and ratification and enforcement can proceed. (Any country ratifying must enforce the law in its own domestic legislation after one year.)

## WILL IT COME INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY?

No. A transition period is necessary - in part because the adoption procedure takes time, and importantly, because corporations and states need time to change practices to reduce risk of collapse and humanitarian suffering. However, such transitions can be effected in a limited time when required. Policies brought in overnight during the recent pandemic have demonstrated the ability of governments to move fast - and the current ecological crisis is rapidly creating a time limit for us.

## WHO WILL BE PROSECUTABLE?

Ecocide law is not intended to punish end users and ordinary citizens but decision-makers at the top level - the directing minds in a given situation where the crime of ecocide has been committed. These persons may be ministers of state or CEOs/senior officers of corporations or other bodies responsible for ecocide.

## HOW WILL THE LAW BE ENFORCED?

Once a country ratifies ecocide as a crime at the international level, they must incorporate it into domestic legislation. If you have an ecocide happening in your country, your government should be the one to prosecute. The International Criminal Court comes into play only if nation states cannot or will not prosecute.

## WILL CORPORATIONS TRY TO STOP THIS CRIME BEING ESTABLISHED?

A few may, but our conversations with corporate leaders so far suggest a largely positive response. An enforceable deterrent will really help level the playing field, so that doing the right thing will no longer put companies at a disadvantage. Indeed, it is likely to unleash new levels of innovation and creativity, and steer government subsidies in a healthier direction. Many of the solutions we need to transition to a stable planet already exist or are in development, and this law will strongly support them by preventing the flow of finance to practices that cause serious harm.

## WHAT IF A COUNTRY (E.G., US, CHINA) ISN'T A MEMBER OF THE ICC?

Ecocide law will create a powerful marginalising effect, even in countries which are not members or haven't ratified. Importantly, transnational corporations would not be able to operate ecocidal practices in any jurisdiction signed up to the law. Countries that have ratified the law can enforce it, and any countries subscribing to the principles of universal jurisdiction may also prosecute non-nationals if a perpetrator sets foot in their territory.

# How to answer common questions about ecocide

## ISN'T ECOCIDE LAW TOO EXTREME?

The current legal framework to deal with threats to environment and climate is inadequate. Many large global corporations and policy-makers still prioritise economic growth and profit above all else and continue to damage the environment.

We've tried to incentivise them, but without new frameworks, long-standing habit is hard to change - and let's face it, some of them simply don't care. They are happy to pay the fines because they can afford them.

Ecocide law is the most effective solution because: it will change the rules at the international level, hold key decision-makers in multinationals and governments accountable for their actions and create a legal framework for environmental protection.

## WHY CAN'T WE JUST USE INCENTIVES AND FINES?

Incentives and fines are not effective because many companies can afford to pay for damaging the environment.

## IS ECOCIDE LAW COMPATIBLE WITH ECONOMIC GROWTH?

The "growth at all costs" approach to economics is in large part what has created the level of ecocide we are currently witnessing. But perpetual growth is not the only way to approach the economy, and indeed is impossible on a finite planet. We advocate for a transition period to allow economic systems to change focus and direction. If the ecosystems that underpin our economic activity collapse, we will face far worse than a recession! Ecology must inform economy and not vice versa.

Many of the solutions we need (renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, circular economy...) already exist, but are not politically and economically supported while the doors to the polluting ways remain open. Closing those doors will enable new ones to open.

## WHAT SECTORS WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE NEW LAW?

Any sectors that threaten severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment. Many industries risk doing this, from industrial agriculture to mineral extraction, but it is not so much about the sector (who), as the method (how) and the scale of damage (what). This is why the law will help steer towards less destructive practices.

## WILL THIS IMPACT COST AND QUALITY OF LIFE?

Ecocide law will create a level-playing field for the solutions needed, shifting policy and subsidies in the right direction to support a working transition for all of us into the future.

## HAS PROGRESS BEEN MADE SO FAR?

Interest in criminalising ecocide is already a matter of public record at parliamentary and/or government level in the following countries via motions, resolutions, parliamentary questions, petitions, white papers or full proposals of law:

Bangladesh, Brazil, Bolivia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Maldives, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal, Samoa, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, the UK and Vanuatu as well as at the European Parliament, the Nordic Council and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

## WHO SUPPORTS ECOCIDE LAW?

Thousands of individuals around the globe have already showed their support for ecocide law:

- more than 40,000 people have signed the international petition calling on governments to declare support for making ecocide an international crime.
- more than 20,000 people have signed up to become [Earth Protectors](#).
- Many high-profile celebrities, from Pope Francis to Paul McCartney, Princess Esmeralda of Belgium, Cara Delevingne and Dr Jane Goodall, have declared their support for ecocide law.

[FULL FAQ HERE](#)

# Thank you

Do you need another resource that you couldn't find in this toolkit? Do you want to get further involved in the network? Please let us know at **youth@stopecocide.earth**

**Follow us on social media**



**[stopecocide.earth/youth](https://stopecocide.earth/youth)**