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# Recognising 'Ecocide' as a Crime: Local and Regional Governance on the Front Line of Severe Environmental Destruction

## Dialogue

**Date and time:** Tuesday, 23 June 2026, 16:00 Local time

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Lead organizer:** Lauren Banham, Stop Ecocide International

### Background

The impact of cities on the environment has long been a focus of climate justice discourse, often leaving the damage to urban communities overlooked. When asked to picture severe environmental destruction, or 'ecocide', many imagine the spoiling of remote, untouched ecosystems. In reality, much ecological degradation occurs in or near populated, urban areas, placing local and regional government on the frontline of tackling the immediate and long-term consequences.

In recent years, the concept of ecocide has been gaining traction globally at a significant rate. Laws to criminalise ecocide have been adopted in France, Belgium, Mauritius and Chile, with proposals for legislation put forward in many countries such as Brazil, Mexico, The Netherlands, Italy, Argentina, French Polynesia, India, Democratic Republic of Congo and Peru. In September 2024 Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa made an official proposal to include ecocide as the fifth independent crime of the International Criminal Court's Rome Statue.

The implications of this global momentum towards the prevention and criminalisation of ecocide will have far-reaching implications that will certainly impact local and regional governments. Municipalities have the



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opportunity not just to observe this rapid progress but to be actively involved in calling for this important change.

## **Objectives / Expected outcomes**

- Highlight the role of LRGs in responding to ecocide
- Dispel the misconception that ecocide occurs only in remote, unpopulated areas
- Sign post how LRGs and other Town Hall organisations can support the criminalisation of ecocide

## **Agenda**

### Moderator

Lauren Banham - Special Advisor, Stop Ecocide International

### Speakers

Jai-Ayla Sutherland - Program Officer, Mass Violence and Atrocities, Stanley Centre and Secretariat Member, Peace in Our Cities network

Mayor Cristian Zamora - Mayor of Cuenca

Representative from Utrecht (TBC)

Abdallah I Anati - Executive Director, Association of Palestinian Local Authorities