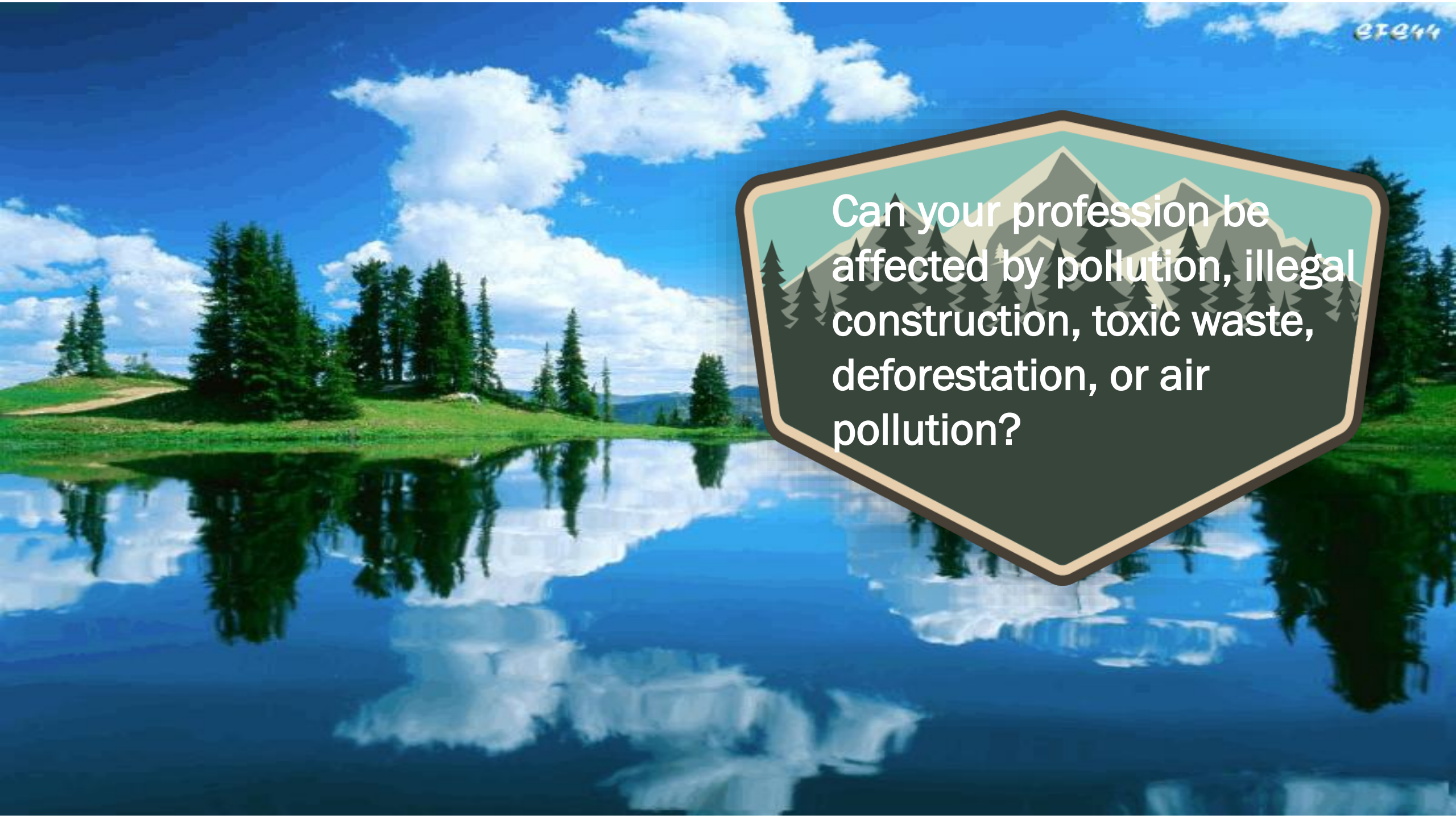




**Environmental  
Crime and  
Sustainable  
Development: Legal  
Challenges and  
Global Responses**

**Olga Koshevaliska**



Can your profession be affected by pollution, illegal construction, toxic waste, deforestation, or air pollution?



Environmental crime is not only a legal issue — it affects health, economy, engineering, cities, and future generations.





*“Which do you think is the most dangerous environmental crime?”*

- A) Air pollution*
- B) Illegal waste dumping*
- C) Illegal logging*
- D) Water contamination*





**WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME?**



# HOW POLLUTION RUINS OUR HEALTH ?





**Environmental crime refers to illegal activities that harm the environment, including:**

**Illegal waste trafficking  
Illegal mining and logging  
Wildlife trafficking  
Industrial pollution  
Illegal construction**



unto this dust, we return



## Wildfire Deforestation



24 Press24



Кавадарчани правеле колбаси па запалиле цела шума |  
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**Illegal hunting and fishing**  
**Illegal trafficking of wildlife**



Радио Слободна Европа


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NETFLIX

Pollution – air pollution, waste pollution, water pollution...



Not great, not terrible



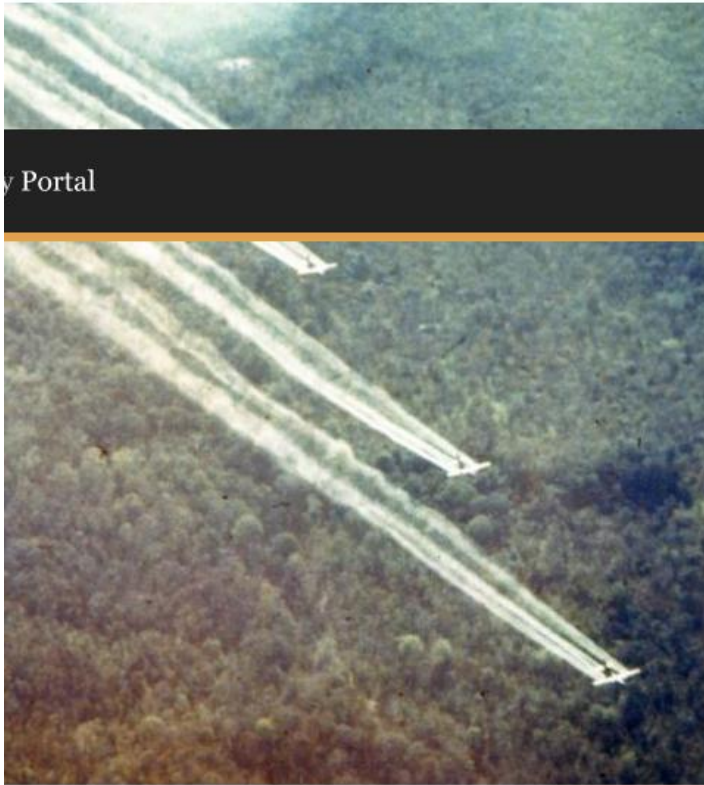
**Killing or destroying protected species of wild flora or fauna**  
**Unauthorised introduction of wild species into nature**  
**Unauthorised trade, importation or transportation of wild flora or fauna**

**Torture of animals**

**Serious Acts Against the Environment and Nature**



...Use of chemical weapon  
Agent Orange was the first  
context in which the word  
“ecocide” was recorded.



icides in central South Vietnam, 1966.

## to Agent Orange, a case of , Vietnam

CN | IT | FR | TR | AR



*etnam War, the U.S. Air Force sprayed more than 80 million liters of herbicides contaminated with dioxin, a deadly compound that contaminates the soil, the ocean and the people.*



These ponds are actually water-filled bomb craters from the Vietnam War. Photographed on July 25, 1997, near the northeastern Laotian village of Sam Neau. David L...

First mention of the word ecocide



# Ecocide



Ecocide can be considered a method of genocide when the destruction of the ecosystems of a geographical area substantially threatens the existence of the social group of that geographical area

# & Genocide

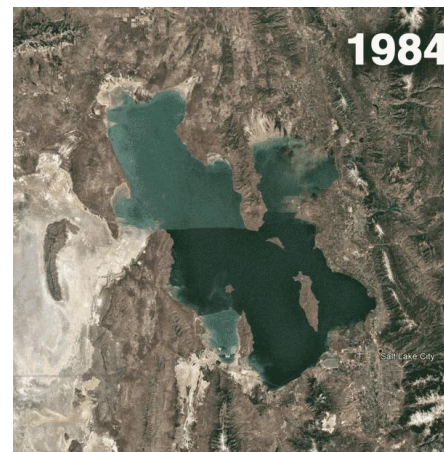


Article 2 of the Genocide Convention defines genocide as an act "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such". According to the United Nations definition, such crimes include: killing people, inflicting physical or psychological injury, deteriorating living conditions to life-threatening, preventing the birth of children, and forcibly removing children from their parents.

# Ecocide

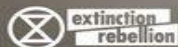
**“Ecocide” means unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.**

**INTERNATIONAL ECOCIDE CRIME IS A LAW TO PROTECT THE EARTH – Polly Higgins**



*Pesticides kill bees.  
No bees, no food.*

**MAKE  
ECOCIDE  
A CRIME!**



*Oceans generate 50% of the oxygen we breathe.  
Their destruction must be punished.*

**MAKE  
ECOCIDE  
A CRIME!**





According to Europol's mandate, these offences may include, but are not limited to:

- improper collection, transportation, recovery or disposal of waste;
- unlawful operation of a facility in which hazardous activity is carried out or in which hazardous substances or preparations are stored;
- the killing, destruction, possession or trade of protected wildlife or plant species;
- production, import, export, marketing, or use of substances that deplete the ozone layer.

Environmental crime is one of the EU's priorities in the fight against serious and organised crime as part of EMPACT 2022-2025.

# Environmental Crimes

European Directive 2008/99/EC on the protection of the environment through criminal law



## Waste

The improper collection, transport, recovery, or disposal of dangerous or toxic waste.



## Dangerous substances

Dangerous activities carried out by illegal operations of a plant in which hazardous substances or preparations are being stored.



## Wildlife and plants

The killing, destruction, unlawful possession or trade of protected wildlife and plants species.



## Ozone depleting substances

The production, importation/exportation, marketing, or use of ozone-depleting substances.



## **Why It Is Often an “Invisible” Crime**

## **Why It’s Different from Ordinary Crime**

### **No immediate victim**

- **Damage appears slowly, not visible at first**
- **Technical complexity hides responsibility**
- **Powerful offenders (corporations, corrupt networks)**



# ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME VS. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SDG	Impact
SDG 3	Health (cancer, respiratory disease)
SDG 6	Clean water
SDG 11	Sustainable cities
SDG 12	Responsible production
SDG 13 & 15	Climate & biodiversity

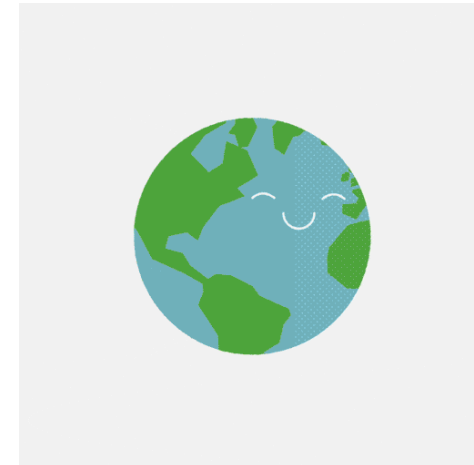
 **Key Message:**

**You cannot have sustainable development without controlling environmental crime.**

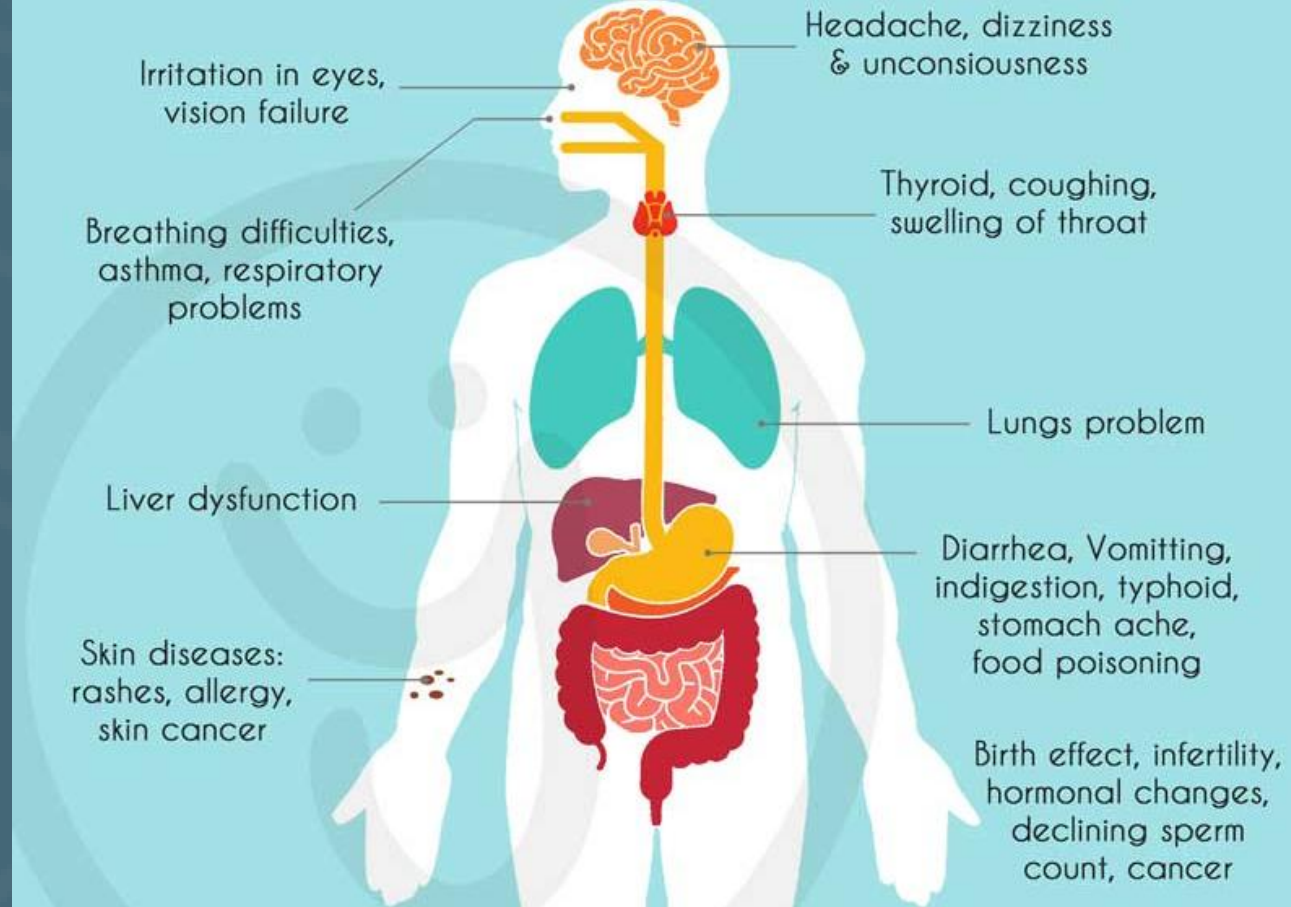




**Key Message:**  
**You cannot have sustainable development without controlling environmental crime.**



**Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without destroying the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Environmental crime works in the opposite direction. It extracts maximum profit today while transferring maximum damage to tomorrow.**



**Example:**  
 Toxic waste → underground water → cancer → health system collapse



SOIL POLLUTION



AIR POLLUTION



WATER POLLUTION



Example:

Illegal logging → floods → infrastructure damage





**Example:**

Air pollution → respiratory disease → productivity loss

# LEGAL CHALLENGES IN DETECTION & ENFORCEMENT

## • **A. Detection Problems**

- **Requires scientific expertise**
- **Requires technology (monitoring, sensors, labs)**
- **Environmental damage appears years later**

## 🏛️ **B. Enforcement Problems**


- **Weak inspections**
- **Lack of specialized prosecutors**
- **Corruption**
- **Political pressure**
- **Cases require complex expert evidence**



- 🌐 **Lack of Harmonized Legislation - International problems**
  - **Acts illegal in one state, legal in another**
  - **Waste trafficked across borders**
  - **“Pollution havens”**



# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE? INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS & THE STATE

-  Individual Responsibility
- Illegal dumping
- Illegal forest cutting

## Corporate Criminal Liability

- Factories dumping toxic chemicals
- Pharmaceutical waste
- Construction companies destroying protected areas

## State Responsibility

- Failure to control
- Weak institutions
- Selective enforcement



**“Even when a machine causes pollution — a human decision always stands behind it.”**

## Pop Quiz Hotshot



makeagif.com

**Which causes more deaths worldwide?**

- A) Terrorism**
- B) Environmental pollution**
- C) War**

**Can a corporation be criminally liable for environmental crime?**

- A) No**
- B) Only civilly**
- C) Yes**

**Is illegal construction an environmental crime?**

- A) Yes**
- B) No**



## MULTIDISCIPLINARY DISCUSSION CASE:

A factory discharges toxic wastewater into a river for 3 years. Years later, cancer rates rise. The company claims:

“There was no clear law.”

“We had a permit.”

“We sold the company.”

### **Group Discussion:**

**Engineers:** Could this be technically prevented?

**Doctors:** How would this appear in health data?

**Architects:** How does this affect urban planning?

**Lawyers:** Who is liable?

### **Conclusion:**

Environmental crime is ALWAYS multidisciplinary.

Environmental crime is a **scientific, legal, health, engineering and ethical problem**

# APPLYING THE LAW TO AVOID THE LAW



**WE ARE THE FIRST  
GENERATION TO FEEL  
THE EFFECT OF  
CLIMATE CHANGE**

**AND THE LAST  
GENERATION WHO  
CAN DO SOMETHING  
ABOUT IT.**

**Barack Obama**

---



**“Environmental  
crime is not only a  
crime against  
nature.  
It is a crime against  
health, against  
development,  
against justice — and  
against future  
generations.”**



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