



Permanent Mission of the
International Union for Conservation of Nature
to the United Nations

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity

New York, 23 January 2026

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The International Union for Conservation of Nature has proposed an addition to Draft Article 2 to include “widespread, long-lasting, or severe destruction of the natural environment as the means of destruction, damage, or injury to any civilian population”, following positions expressed by many Member States to specifically include environmental harm as a crime against humanity. We drew on widely accepted international law sources to prepare a concrete, realistic proposal that could be supported by all States.

It is tragically foreseeable that environmental destruction could be utilized as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against a civilian population, with potentially devastating consequences. This concern is exacerbated by a number of contemporary factors, including the exponential growth rate of the global population, which relies on limited natural resources that are themselves becoming less accessible due to overuse, climate change, and weather extremes. Given the fundamental importance of natural resources to survival, it may be inevitable that at least some attacks directed against a civilian population are likely to include acts having widespread, long-lasting, or severe destruction of the natural environment as the means of destruction, damage, or injury to the civilian population. This is conduct that merits enumeration as a standalone crime against humanity in Draft Article 2.

Thank you.
