

**Dr Matthew Gillett, LL.M. (Michigan); Ph.D.
(Leiden)**

**Senior Lecturer, University of Essex, UK; United
Nations Special Mandate Holder, Working Group on
Arbitrary Detention**

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***– Check against delivery (the spoken word
prevails). –***

Warm thanks to Dr Richard Dören for the eloquent Laudatory Talk.

I would first like to express my deep thanks to the Chairman of the Hans Günter Brauch Foundation's Board, Dr Brauch, for his incredible dedication to the cause of enhancing environmental protection. I would also like to thank Lord Mayor Stipp for his support for this event, and for ensuring that my family and I made it here to Mosbach. I have now learnt that Frankfurt Hahn airport is not the same as Frankfurt Airport!

I would further like to thank all the distinguished academics and guests. Your presence here is a testament to your ecological dedication.

It is a singular honour to be jointly awarded the Hans Günter Brauch Foundation Prize for Peace and Ecology in the Anthropocene. My co-winner Angela has produced an

excellent piece of scholarship, and I'm proud to be named alongside her for this award.

Before I say a few words about my research, I'd like to mention two very special guests here this evening. These are my children Eloise and Theodore. I dedicated my book to them and to future generations. They will live in the world that we leave behind us. My daughter wants to be an astronaut and I hope she will achieve that dream one day. Yet, as far as we know, there is no Planet B. We must take care of the Earth that we all live on right at present. My son wants to be a ninja, so he can perhaps help with the enforcement!

Turning to my book, the thesis is that international law constitutes a valid tool to redress environmental harm. But innovation will be required to make this a reality. As Dr. Richard Dören has so eloquently explained, there has been

an unmistakeable opening of international law to environmental degradation. The legal landscape is almost unrecognisable from where it was back in 2014 when I started the PhD which would ultimately become my book.

For example:

- In 2021, the Human Rights Council recognised ‘The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment’;
- In 2022, the United Nations General Assembly recognised this same right
- In 2024, the European Court of Human Rights issued its *Klimaseniorinnen* ruling on climate change obligations;
- In 2025, International Court of Justice in The Hague issued its advisory opinion on climate change.

As for the International Criminal Court, it has also signalled its intent to protect the environment. In 2024, the Office of the Prosecutor declared that it is working on a policy on ‘Environmental Crimes Under the Rome Statute’.

That same year, three Islands States – Vanuatu, Fiji and Samoa formally proposed the inclusion of ecocide as the 5th crime under the Rome Statute of the ICC.

Against that backdrop, my book, which emerged in 2022, is proving to be of growing relevance. I hope that this award will encourage more people will engage with its contents.

In terms of my primary arguments, I acknowledge that international criminal law is not a panacea. However, it is a tool with considerable potential. From former President Slobodan Milosevic from Serbia, through to Charles Taylor from Liberia, we have seen heads of State and other leading

figures put in trial for grave crimes. With the recent arrest and transfer of Rodrigo Duterte from the Philippines, the ICC has taken a further step in this direction. Despite the challenges, there have been successes in prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Cambodia. So there is proof of concept when it comes to the application of international law to large-scale criminality against common values. The natural environment is just such a common value. It is something we must all ultimately share with each other and with future generations.

In this light, international criminal law can and should be applied to environmental harm. But to do so, several disparate strands of law must be integrated. Environmental law, criminal law, humanitarian law and human rights law,

as well as general international law. Like fibres wound together into rope, this can make them greater the sum of their parts. The Court can also apply key advances including the precautionary principle, the preventive principle, the polluter pays principle, and intergenerational equity. The Rome Statute permits reliance on these important legal mechanisms under Article 21(1)(b).

Personally, I have worked on the successful prosecutions of several high level leaders. These include Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb President, and Ratko Mladic, the former general of the Bosnian Serb Forces. Both were convicted for genocide and other crimes and remain in prison to this day. But from my days examining and cross-examining witnesses in court, I have seen the challenges that arise, and these will be even greater in relation to environmental harm. To set out guidance on

collecting and presenting evidence, as well as the interpretation of the law, I zoom in on case studies of toxic dumping, animal exploitation, and attacks during armed conflicts.

At the institutional level, I argue that an environmental crimes court could be established with a purpose-designed mandate. This would provide the opportunity to craft a court with procedures amenable to the scientifically-oriented proceedings. Its jurisdiction could encompass both natural and legal persons, so as to cover corporate responsibility. However, the creation of a new court would necessitate considerable political will. Previous attempts to establish specialised international environmental courts have either lost momentum before creation (the International Court for the Environment) or else never

been used (the Chamber for Environmental Matters of the International Court of Justice).

Already in 1972, the Stockholm Declaration noted that “man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment.” As we pursue the Sustainable Development Goals with a view to transforming our world for the better by 2030, it is imperative to maintain the focus on address attacks on the environment. My book is an effort to explore creative ways to enhance these protections for nature. This award is a tremendous boost and welcome recognition for all those hours spent researching, writing, and editing it.

I thank my supervisors, Prof Larissa ven den Herik and Daniella Dam-de Jong from University of Leiden, and my colleagues from the University of Essex. I also must again thank Dr. Brauch, Richard, and all the organisers.

Finally, I reiterate my thanks to my children for putting up with me and for coming as representatives of future generations. One day it will be you up here speaking on important topics and I encourage you to do so with determination and persistence. To paraphrase the serenity prayer: “grant us the courage to change the things we can, the patience to accept the things we cannot, and the wisdom to know the difference.”