

ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN THE AMAZON BASIN

Enforcing the rule of law to reduce
deforestation and enable
sustainable development

Forest Legality Week
October, 2022



“Think and Do Tank”

Founded in 2011 in Brazil

Over 50 people on staff, in 6 countries

Women-led

**Ranked the “world’s top social
policy think tank” by Prospect**

**Focused on physical, digital and
environmental security**

100+ partners

**Illicit forest economies
and environmental crime
are taking a heavy toll on
the environment, and the
lives and livelihoods of
those who dwell in the
Amazon.**



Environment-Security-Development Nexus



FROM I. Understand the Ecosystem of
Environmental Crime

TO II. Strengthen Governance and
Partnerships

AND III. Enable Sustainable
Development Solutions

Understanding the ecosystem of environmental crime: scope, scale and dynamics



Framing the problem:

Environmental Crime Typology

Case Studies (countries and economies)

EcoCrime Platform

- Economic activities drive deforestation
- 4 major **illegal economic activities**: land grabbing, illegal logging, illegal mining, and agriculture and livestock farming rife with environmental illegalities
- **Ecosystem of environmental and non-environmental related offenses**

Illicit Economies

Illegal Deforestation

Public Land Grabbing

Illegal Logging

Illegal Mining

**Agriculture and
Livestock Farming
rife with environmental
illegalities**

Converging Crimes

Administrative-related Crimes

Corruption, misrepresentation, embezzlement, administrative law crime and other crimes against public administration.

Financial and Tax-related Crimes

Money laundering, tax evasion, smuggling, embezzlement, and other financial crimes

Violent Crimes

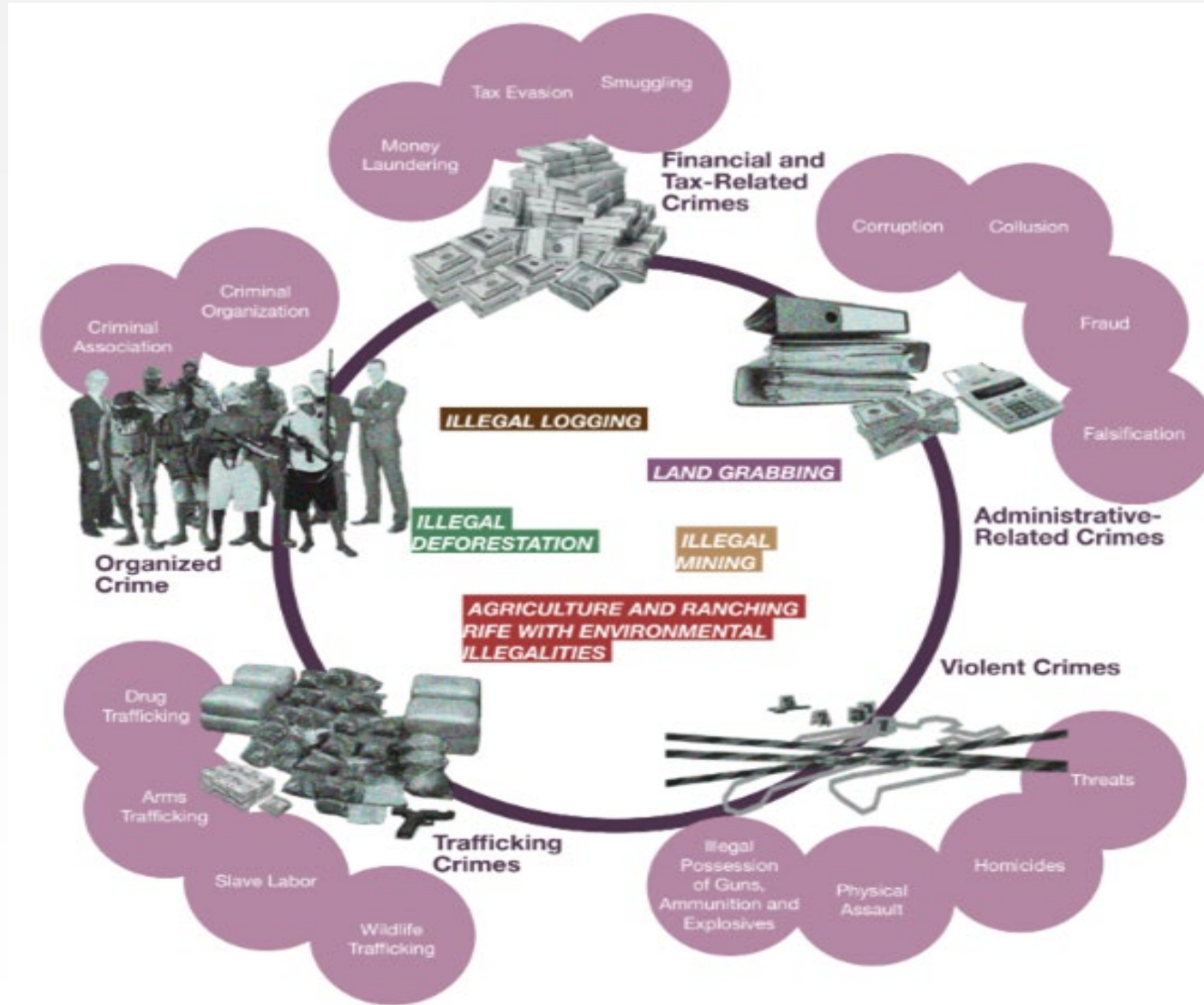
Homicides, threats and other forms of violence; illegal possession of guns, ammunition and explosives

Trafficking Crimes

Drug trafficking, human trafficking, modern slavery

Organized Crime

Criminal association or belonging to a criminal organization



Based on a study of 369 Federal Police operations in Brazil between 2016-2021

CRIMINAL HYPOTHESIS VS. ILLICIT ECONOMY	ILLEGAL DEFORESTATION (N= 99)	ILLEGAL LOGGING (N= 116)	ILLEGAL MINING (N= 137)	LAND GRABBING (N= 52)	AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK FARMING (N=15)
Illegal Deforestation	64 (65%)	34 (29%)	10 (7%)	28 (54%)	8 (53%)
Illegal Logging	26 (26%)	70 (60%)	2 (1%)	8 (15%)	2 (13%)
Illegal Mining	14 (14%)	1 (1%)	84 (61%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)
Land Grabbing	31 (31%)	12 (10%)	1 (1%)	40 (77%)	7 (47%)
Agriculture and Livestock Farming Rife with Environmental Illegalities	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (7%)
Other Environmental Crimes	32 (32%)	27 (23%)	32 (23%)	14 (27%)	4 (27%)
Corruption	28 (28%)	36 (31%)	15 (11%)	22 (42%)	6 (40%)
Fraud	37 (37%)	48 (41%)	21 (15%)	31 (60%)	6 (40%)
Money Laundering	16 (16%)	20 (17%)	35 (26%)	8 (15%)	3 (20%)
Tax-related offenses	1 (1%)	4 (3%)	10 (7%)	2 (4%)	2 (13%)
Criminal Association or Organization	54 (55%)	58 (50%)	64 (47%)	38 (73%)	7 (47%)
Possession of Guns, Ammunition or Explosives	15 (15%)	12 (10%)	29 (21%)	6 (12%)	4 (27%)
Violent Crimes	10 (10%)	9 (8%)	5 (4%)	10 (19%)	3 (20%)
Drug Trafficking	5 (5%)	8 (7%)	9 (7%)	3 (6%)	1 (7%)
Human Trafficking	5 (5%)	4 (3%)	12 (9%)	3 (6%)	3 (20%)

Source: Waisbich et al. (2022)

Comparative overview

COUNTRY/ILLICIT ECONOMIC ACTIVITY	LAND GRABBING*	AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE RANCHING RIFE WITH ILLEGALITIES	ILLICIT COCA CULTIVATION	ILLEGAL LOGGING	ILLEGAL MINING	WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING
BRAZIL						
COLOMBIA						
PERU						
BOLIVIA						
VENEZUELA						
GUYANA						
SURINAME						
ECUADOR						

	HIGH
	MEDIUM
	LOW

*Land grabbing has different manifestations across the region (*Grilagem* in Brazil, *acaparamiento de tierras* in Colombia and Ecuador, *tráfico de tierras* in Peru).

Source: Based on Igarapé-InSight Crime Mapping Environmental Crime in the Amazon Basin

Headlines

There is an ecosystem of environmental crime in the Amazon: environmental illegalities converge with non-environmental crimes (fraud, money laundering, violent crimes, drug trafficking, etc.)

Illegal logging and illegal mining are the main illicit economies are more widely investigated than land grabbing and illegal conversion of forest land into agricultural fields.

The central role of fraud and corruption in laundering natural resources from the Amazon: turning illegally extracted resources into legal products and enabling the appropriation of public forest land

The network of actors destroying the Amazon goes beyond the region. Many are located in major cities far from forest areas in the Amazonian countries and abroad. These actors are often involved in money laundering.

The security threat

Historical environmental-crime related violence (land conflict, violence against local traditional communities, disputes between rival groups exploiting resources)

More recent forms of violence in the last two decades (non-state armed groups, drug trafficking, eased access to guns): with both localized and transnational implications

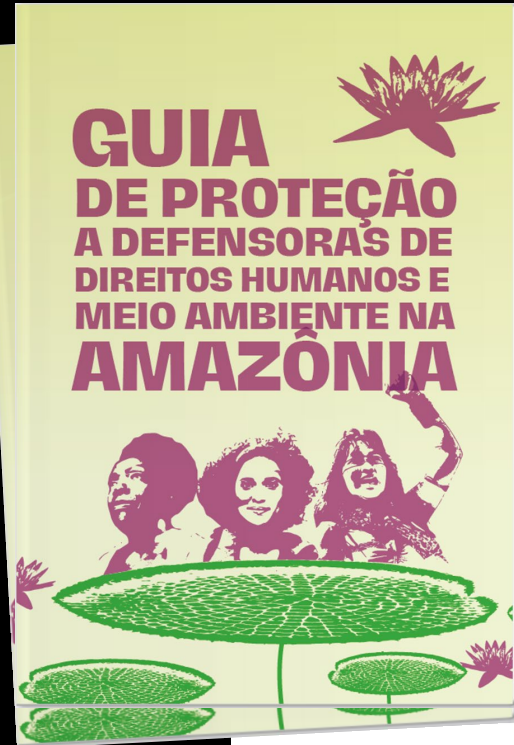
Violence against human rights and environmental defenders (Brazil, Colombia and Peru are among the most deadliest countries for defenders according to Global Witness)

Violence against women and girls in the Amazon: evolving forms of violence (physical, sexual, moral)

Women Defenders in the Amazon

If you are born a woman in the Amazonian region, you are born a defender. Your everyday routine consists in fighting for your your land, for sustainable production and for the protection of the biome.

– Claudelice dos Santos



BRASIL

Oito em cada dez mulheres ambientalistas na Amazônia já sofreram algum tipo de violência, diz pesquisa

Estudo feito pelo Instituto Igarapé revela que ativistas da região são atacadas por garimpeiros, desmatadores e até por companheiros dentro de casa

Arthur Leal
25/02/2022 - 07:54 / Atualizado em 25/02/2022 - 11:17



Claudelice Santos, de 39 anos: ativista que atua na preservação do meio ambiente no Pará perdeu irmão e cunhada que denunciaram fazendeiros há 11 anos e sofre ameaças Foto: Reprodução

Rule of Law Solutions

II. Strengthen governance and partnerships: build accountable governance and robust networks to address rule of law challenges

Identify gaps and strengthen state institutions' capacity to dismantle environmental crime

(Police, Public Prosecution, Financial Intelligence Units)

Build trust and foster regional cooperation among countries in the Amazon region

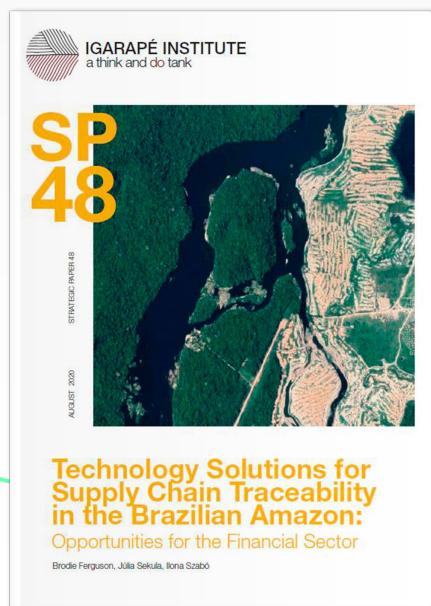
(Partnerships with Brazilian, Colombian and Peruvian Institutions, and with INTERPOL and UNODC)

Strengthen global, regional, national, and subnational networks to address climate and security issues

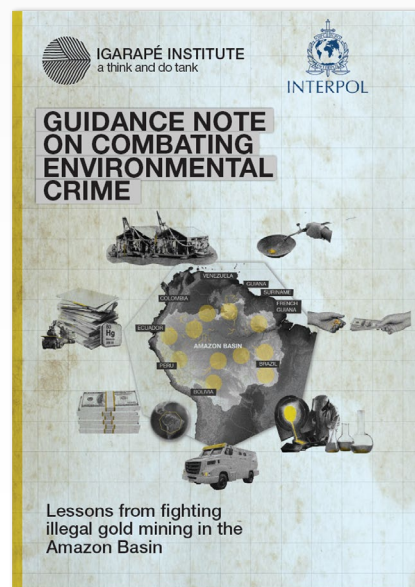
(UN, WEF, OTCA, Concert for the Amazon, Brazil Coalition, Financial Innovation Lab, Governors' and Mayors' networks)

III. Enable sustainable development solutions: transparency, traceability, informed risk analysis

Promote technologies and develop better metrics for traceability and transparency



Engage Brazilian corporate and financial actors, and regulators to reduce illegalities across all the supply chains connected to the Amazon and other biomes



Informed risk analysis (“ESG AAA”): attract responsible capital for sustainable development in the Amazon (reforestation, agroforestry, carbon credit markets, sustainable tourism, biotech, etc.)



Concluding thoughts

Understanding forest illegality (the what, the who and the how) is key to fight deforestation and the ecosystem of environmental and non-environmental converging crimes in the Amazon

This requires paying attention to both **localized and transnational dynamics** (as well as to local, national and international actors and their networks)

The **threats and implications** are multidimensional and multi-level

Concerted action at national, regional and international levels is needed. Public sector, private sector and civil society all have a role to play



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Thank you!

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