



## Event Advisory

### **PROMOTE, PROTECT, RESPECT**

#### **Environmental Rights**

---

**When:** Tuesday, March 6th 09.30 – 11.00

**Where:** Room XXII, Palais des Nations, Geneva

**What:** Launch of the UN Environmental Rights Initiative

**Who:** UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment - **Professor John Knox**

Global Environment Editor, The Guardian - **Jon Watts**

President and Chief Executive, Bianca Jagger Human Rights Foundation – **Bianca Jagger**

Global Witness Co-Founder - **Patrick Alley**

Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights – **Kate Gilmore**

The UN's leading expert on environmental law – **Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**

Environmental rights are enshrined in over 100 constitutions yet almost four people a week are killed defending those rights, while many more are harassed, intimidated and forced from their lands. Around 40 -50 percent of the 197 environmental defenders killed in 2017 came from indigenous and local communities.

But the environmental defenders' crisis is not confined to indigenous communities. Violations of environmental rights are on the rise worldwide fueled by corruption, greater competition for natural resources, weak enforcement, and the irresponsible exploitation of land and other natural goods.

The links between human rights and the environment are rapidly gaining recognition at the international level, including through the adoption of groundbreaking UN Human Rights Council Resolutions on Human Rights and the Environment and on Environmental Human Rights Defenders, as well as a UN General Assembly Resolution on the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

The UN's Environmental Rights Initiative will bring environmental protection nearer to the people by helping them to better understand their rights and how to defend them; by working with media to improve coverage of rights issues; by calling on the private sector to



move beyond a culture of compliance to one where environmental rights are championed; and by assisting governments to implement environmental rights obligations.

**Our expert panelists will answer some of the following questions:**

- What is driving increasing violations of environmental rights?
- What are the world's worst affected countries and communities?
- How can a rights-based-approach to natural resource management make a difference?
- Where is law and enforcement letting us down and what can we do about it?
- How important is citizen engagement in mitigating violations?
- Are things going to get worse before they get better?

**Learn more about human rights and the environment:**

<http://web.unep.org/divisions/delc/human-rights-and-environment>

<http://environmentalrightsdatabase.org/>

<http://srenvironment.org/>

**Learn more about environmental defenders:**

[www.environment-rights.org](http://www.environment-rights.org)

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2017/jul/13/the-defenders-tracker>

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/stop-the-murder-of-environmental-defenders-in-latin-america\\_us\\_591345c4e4b0e3bb894d5caf](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/stop-the-murder-of-environmental-defenders-in-latin-america_us_591345c4e4b0e3bb894d5caf)

For more information contact: Niamh Brannigan Head of Communications for Environmental Governance +254 717 733348, [niamh.brannigan@unep.org](mailto:niamh.brannigan@unep.org)