Imagining Future Reparations for Environmental Destruction


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Noting the interconnections between environmental destruction and periods of conflict and mass violence, scholars have explored multiple ways in which international criminal law might be better equipped to respond to such harms. These have included introducing a new crime against the environment, creating specific international environmental courts, and adapting existing frameworks. While recognising the need for more substantive measures in the long term, this chapter considers how existing international criminal frameworks might be used to respond to environmental destruction in the short to medium term. Focusing on options for repair in particular, it considers the ways in which the International Criminal Court’s reparation framework and the Trust Fund for Victim’s assistance mandate might be used to facilitate reparative measures which respond to environmental destruction. It argues that there are three interlinked ways in which this might be done: first, by introducing the concept of ‘eco-sensitive’ reparations and assistance; second, by awarding reparations that explicitly respond to environmental destruction when related to the ICC’s core crimes; and third, by exploring the possibilities of environmentally ‘transformative’ reparations.

Introduction

From the use of Agent Orange in South East Asia, to the burning of Kuwaiti oil wells, to illegal poaching across the African Great Lakes region, examples of conflict and atrocity-related environmental destruction\(^2\) can be found across the world.\(^3\) As awareness of the interconnections between mass violence and environmental destruction has grown, legal

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\(^1\) An earlier version of this piece appears as: Rachel Killean, ‘From Ecocide to Eco-sensitivity: ‘Greening’ Reparations at the International Criminal Court’ *The International Journal of Human Rights* (2020).


frameworks have expanded to grant greater environmental protections in times of conflict.\(^4\) Examples include the adoption of the Environmental Modification Convention,\(^5\) the Declaration and Protocol on Asphyxiating Gases and Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, and Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions;\(^6\) the drafting of guidelines for the protection of the environment during armed conflict by the International Committee of the Red Cross;\(^7\) and the 2019 legal principles developed by the International Law Commission on the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflicts.\(^8\)

In this context, the continuing failure of international criminal law to address environmental destruction is notable.\(^9\) The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court includes only one explicit reference to environmental protection, identifying ‘widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment’ as a possible war crime.\(^10\) However, the stringent jurisdictional requirements associated with this provision mean it has yet to be used in practice.\(^11\) Indeed, the anthropocentric nature of the core crimes\(^12\) (genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression) frequently renders invisible the destructive harm that mass violence can have on the natural environment.\(^13\) In recognition of this lacuna, activists, lawyers, policy actors and academics have long explored different ways to create individual criminal accountability for environmental destruction.\(^14\) Some have campaigned for the establishment of a specific international environmental court,\(^15\) while others have explored how the ICC might be used to respond to this type of harm. Amongst those in the latter camp, two approaches have developed.

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\(^{4}\) See e.g. Carsten Stahn, Jens Iverson and Jennifer S. Easterday, Environmental Protection and Transitions from Conflict to Peace (OUP 2017).

\(^{5}\) Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques, 18 May 1977, 16 I.L.M. 90.

\(^{6}\) ICRC, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 1125 UNTS 3, 8 June 1977.


\(^{9}\) Notable, but reflective of a broader perception within green criminology that formal institutions of criminal justice fail to take environmental crime seriously. See Rob White, ‘Reparative Justice, Environmental Crime and Penalties for the Powerful’ (2017) 67 Crime, Law and Social Change 117.


\(^{12}\) Carsten Stahn, Jens Iverson and Jennifer Easterday, Environmental Protection and Transitions from Conflict to Peace (OUP 2017) 16.


On the one hand are those who argue in favour of a new international crime against the environment, such as the crime of ‘ecocide’ or ‘grave’ or ‘severe’ crimes against the environment. While the urgent environmental challenges facing our planet, the failure of environmental regulation to prevent widespread destruction, and the normative expressive value of prohibiting the loss of ecosystems all make the call for a specific crime against the environment compelling, there are significant barriers to introducing a new crime. These include political resistance, practical challenges surrounding proving intent, the obstacles to recognising the role of corporations in environmental destruction, and the additional resource strains associated with introducing a new type of crime.

Partially as a result of these barriers, others have interrogated the ways in which we might adapt the existing ICC legal framework to incorporate greater awareness of environmental destruction. In addition to exploring the possibilities offered by the explicit reference to the environment in the context of war crimes, scholars have noted the potential for environmental destruction to constitute a genocidal act, a crime against humanity or an act of aggression. Such explorations are not exclusively academic; the last decade has indicated that the ICC’s Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) has also considered the possibility of pursuing prosecutions which encompass environmental harms. Most notably, OTP Policy Papers released in 2013 and 2016 listed ‘environmental damage’, ‘the destruction of the environment’, ‘illegal

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18 Higgins, Short and South, (n.16).


26 Gillett, n. 23.
exploitation of natural resources’ and ‘the illegal dispossession of land’ as explicit factors to be considered when selecting sites for investigation and cases for prosecution.27

The OTP’s powers are naturally constrained by the ICC’s legal framework: it can only pursue situations and cases in which core crimes appear to have been committed.28 As a result, some commentators have been sceptical about how the Policy Papers’ indication of an increased environmental awareness will manifest in practice.29 Yet, the ICC Senior Appeal Counsel Helen Brady has stated that the reference to the environment is ‘highly important and it’s not just symbolic – it means something.’30 While its possible implications for future case selections and prosecutions have been explored elsewhere,31 in this chapter, I take a closer look at how other organs of the ICC might build upon and expand this emerging environmental sensitivity. In particular, I focus on the possibilities of incorporating greater environmental awareness into measures of repair, both through the awarding of specific reparations, and through the Trust Fund for Victims’ (TFV) assistance mandate.

To briefly introduce these measures of repair: reparations may be awarded by the ICC’s Trial Chambers following the conviction of an accused.32 Reparations can be individual, collective or both, depending on the scope and extent of any damage, loss or injury, and may include restitution, compensation and rehabilitation.33 These orders can be made against the convicted person, or through the TFV,34 an independent, non-judicial institution which can use funds made available by voluntary contributions to complement any money or property collected from the convicted person.35 In addition to implementing reparation awards, the TFV may also provide more general assistance to victims who have suffered harm as a result of a crime which is within the Court’s jurisdiction and linked to a situation under investigation.36 This can be

28 Anton (n.25) 1.
32 Rome Statute, art 75(1).
34 Rome Statute, art 75(2).
done prior to any judgment being issued, and can include physical and/or psychological rehabilitation and material support.

While reparations and victim assistance are increasingly acknowledged as central aspects of post-conflict and post-atrocity recovery, the understandable prioritisation of severe human rights violations can lead to an overlooking of environmental destruction. However, this arguably overlooks the interconnected relationships that exist between humans and their environments. Environmental degradation and the loss of natural resources can harm livelihoods, place barriers in the way of recovery, and sow the seeds of future human rights violations. Rather than seeing environmental and human welfare as mutually exclusive, it is therefore worth exploring how reparations and measures of assistance which seek to respond to human rights violations might also encompass environmental considerations.

The chapter is written in the knowledge that significant pressures on the ICC and TFV’s reparative mandates already exist, and that international criminal institutions cannot in and of themselves prevent and respond to the environmental devastation that so often accompanies conflict and atrocity. However, I argue that the scale of the problem should invite innovative and flexible legal responses whenever possible – including within existing structures - rather than induce paralysis. In that spirit, I argue that there are three interlinked ways that reparations and measures of assistance can contribute to repairing environmental destruction. First, through the incorporation of an ‘eco-sensitive’ approach to reparations and assistance. Second, through the awarding of reparations explicitly responding to environmental destruction that can be appropriately linked to convictions for the core crimes, and third, by exploring the possibilities of environmentally ‘transformative’ reparations. It should be noted that the recommendations contained within this chapter are necessarily fairly general, as every experience of conflict or atrocity is different, and there are therefore no specific reparative measures that will always be appropriate.

‘Eco-Sensitive’ Implementation of Reparation and Assistance Measures

Reparations can take myriad forms and recognise a diverse range of physical, moral, emotional and social harms, experienced both individually and collectively. Their flexibility allows them

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40 And, indeed, the value of repairing nature for its own sake.
43 Lindgren (n.20).
to be sensitive to the nature and context of the crimes that have been committed.\textsuperscript{44} However, if misconceived or insensitively delivered, reparative measures, or indeed measures of victim assistance, may exacerbate tensions or undermine the cooperation and reconciliation needed to prevent future violence and harm.\textsuperscript{45} In cases where the environment has been directly targeted, or where there are tensions around access to resources, a lack of sensitivity to such considerations could have repercussions for the possibilities of long-term peace. Therefore, at a minimum, this chapter argues in favour of an ‘eco-sensitive’ approach to reparations and victim assistance measures. Adapted from the practice of conflict-sensitivity\textsuperscript{46} (which is already implemented by the TFV),\textsuperscript{47} I define an eco-sensitive approach as one which (i) attempts to understand how reparations may interact with environmental damage through the use of environmental impact assessments; (ii) monitors, evaluates and mitigates against any unintended environmental effects, and (iii) positively influences environmental sustainability wherever possible. Such an approach would prioritise biological diversity and ecological integrity and incorporate an awareness of the possible long-term and inter-generational impacts of reparative projects. Adopting an eco-sensitive approach would signal a further ‘mainstreaming’ of environmental consciousness in the work of the Court and TFV. It would acknowledge the interconnections between humans and their environment, and the need to ensure projects do not have unintentionally harmful results in the future due to their environmental impacts.

There is some evidence that the TFV is already moving in an eco-sensitive direction. While acknowledging that the ICC does not have a ‘going green policy’, the Fund claims that it has tried to progressively integrate an environmental dimension into its interventions.\textsuperscript{48} For example, in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan the Fund identifies as one of its Programming Guiding Principles:

\begin{quote}
Work with implementing partners to assess, mitigate and evaluate the likely environmental impact of a proposed project or programme, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

However, the Fund has acknowledged that its ability to integrate environmental concerns into its activities has been limited by the lack of a monitoring mechanism and limited resources available to dedicate specifically to environmental issues. The 2014-2017 Strategic Plan

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\textsuperscript{44} Ruti Teitel, \textit{Transitional Justice} (OUP 2000) 127.
\textsuperscript{45} Merryl Lawry-White, ‘Victims of Environmental Harm During Conflict: The Potential for Justice’ in Carsten Stahn, Jens Iverson and Jennifer S. Easterday (eds) \textit{Environmental Protection and Transitions from Conflict to Peace} (OUP 2017) 368.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 24.
\textsuperscript{49} Idem.
\end{flushright}
claimed that the next TFV plan would pay particular attention to putting in place a structured monitoring system that matches its stated priorities and goals for environmental impact. As the Fund has not made subsequent Strategic Plans public, it is not possible to ascertain whether it has done so. However, while an eco-sensitive approach would at a minimum incorporate the monitoring and evaluation highlighted in the Strategic Plan, it would also ideally look beyond ‘mitigation’ to consider ways in which assistance and reparation projects could positively influence environmental sustainability.50 Indeed, as noted by Dutton and Ni Aoláin, the TFV’s focus on harm requires that its ‘services focus on addressing the root causes of the suffering experienced by beneficiaries.’51 In cases where experiences of harm are intertwined with environmental destruction or associated resource challenges, an eco-sensitive approach that centered environmental sustainability might better enable effective engagement with those root causes.

The broad scope of the TFV’s assistance mandate might prove valuable in this regard, as it is designed to enable the delivery of reparative measures to a ‘more extensive range of victims who are affected by the broader situations before the Court, regardless of whether the harm they suffered stems from particular crimes charged in a specific case.’52 However, even in the context of judicially awarded reparations, introducing this level of eco-sensitivity would not rely on or be linked to the OTP’s selection of situations and cases which explicitly feature environmental destruction. Rather, it could be implemented throughout the TFV mandate and incorporated into the delivery of measures that respond to human rights violations resulting from the core crimes. For example, if implementing collective symbolic reparations53 to acknowledge suffering, the Fund might encompass the establishment of projects that help restore and conserve natural spaces. Drawing from environmental peacebuilding and security studies,54 this might involve, for example, creating peace parks for use by impacted communities. Examples of peace parks can be found in diverse contexts, and although often used to resolve transboundary conflicts between states, can also be used to contribute to the rehabilitation of an area after conflict.55 In Myanmar, a community-based NGO known as KESAN has been involved in the creation of the Salween Peace Park Initiative, described as a ‘space that promotes peace, cooperation, cultural preservation, and environmental and natural

51 Dutton and Ni Aoláin (n.37) 522.
resources conservation.'\textsuperscript{56} The Peace Park’s Charter establishes that the war has eroded the bio-cultural practices of local communities, and acknowledges that peacebuilding must have both ‘ecological and cultural dimensions.'\textsuperscript{57}

Reparations or assistance programmes which seek to respond to material harm, such as vocational training and income-generating activities\textsuperscript{58} could also be designed in ways that minimise negative environmental impacts and where possible proactively seek to repair environments while restoring the livelihoods of victims. This potential is already acknowledged and pursued by the TFV, which has highlighted ‘environmentally-friendly livelihood activities’ as a form of material support that can be offered through its assistance mandate.\textsuperscript{59} For example, in Northern Uganda, the TFV has supported training in bee-keeping, improved agricultural techniques and tree-planting.\textsuperscript{60} The dependence of much of the population within regions of armed conflict on natural resources, means that initiatives improving the quality and accessibility of such resources could potentially assist a large number of people beyond the direct beneficiaries.\textsuperscript{61} Indeed, the TFV describes longer-term sustainability and impact of material assistance as a particularly rewarding and promising aspect of its mandate, noting the potential for community-grown, community-owned and community-managed interventions in post-conflict settings.\textsuperscript{62} Given the long-term nature of the assistance programme and involvement of local as well as international project implementing partners,\textsuperscript{63} introducing an eco-sensitive approach to these measures could arguably entrench practices that are sustainable for both the communities and the environment which they inhabit. Indeed, given the centrality of collaboration to the TFV’s mandates, this might have knock-on impacts in the way that implementing partners engage with their own work.

To be effective, eco-sensitivity would require application at each stage of reparation and assistance design and delivery and would be mainstreamed into the TFV’s institutional mindset.\textsuperscript{64} This would require initial environmental impact assessments of the effects likely to arise from a proposed reparation or assistance project. This would feature both consultation with local experts (when possible) and public participation as integral aspects to ensuring the

\textsuperscript{58} Modalities previously awarded in the Lubanga and Katanga cases in the DRC situation. See TFV, 3 March 2015 Draft Implementation Plan; TFV, 24 March 2017 Draft Implementation Plan.
\textsuperscript{59} TFV, Report to the Assembly of State Parties on the Projects and Activities of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims for the Period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018 Seventeenth Session, ICC-ASP/17/14, 5-12 December 2018.
\textsuperscript{63} Dutton and Ní Aoláin, (n.37) 505.
project proceeded in an eco-sensitive manner. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation would also be required as projects progressed, and the TFV and its implementing partners would need to have the willingness to adjust as necessary. Indeed, an eco-sensitive approach might involve fundamental changes in the way the TFV thinks about the delivery of its reparation and assistance mandates, for example through the development of eco-sensitive policies and project delivery standards. As with integrating a conflict-sensitivity model, introducing greater eco-sensitivity would have resource implications, and require a shift in mindset amongst those responsible for designing and implementing reparations. However, the resource implications of this shift would lessen with time and should be weighed against the risks of environmentally unsustainable or damaging projects, as well as the potential benefits of measures which capture the connections between human and environmental recovery.

While this section has focused on the TFV and its implementing partners, it is worth noting that an eco-sensitive approach to reparations delivery could also be supported and further entrenched in practice by the ICC Chambers, through the incorporation of eco-sensitivity into any subsequent reparation principles, awards or implementation plans produced in future cases. The Court has to date never adopted institution-wide principles on the delivery of reparations. While this has been critiqued for producing a lack of clarity and inconsistency, it also enables the flexible development of practice through the progressive practices of different Chambers. It also leaves open the possibility of amended or new principles in future as the ICC adapts to new ways of thinking, including the possible future adoption of eco-sensitive approaches. Similarly, as new cases approach the reparations stage, opportunities may arise for Chambers to make awards that specifically address environmental destruction, as explored in the following section.

**Awarding Reparations that Address Environmental Destruction**

The ICC’s jurisprudence has established the conditions necessary for a victim to claim reparations. A victim must be a natural person or legal entity that has suffered harm, whether directly or indirectly. The harm can be material, physical and psychological, but must be personal and must be the result of a crime within the jurisdiction of the Court. The

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67 Resource Pack (n.46).
71 *Prosecutor v Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, Judgment on the appeals against the “Decision establishing the principles and procedures to be applied to reparations” of 7 August 2012 with AMENDED order for reparations (Annex A) and public annexes 1 and 2, ICC-01/04-01/06-3129-AnxA, 3 March 2015.
requirement that harm requiring reparation must be ‘personal’ to a natural or legal person is reflective of the anthropocentric nature of the core crimes and prohibits the Court from responding to environmental destruction outside the context of a related human rights violation. However, in cases where the OTP successfully brings prosecutions in line with its Policy Papers, which encompass ‘the destruction of the environment, the illegal exploitation of natural resources or the illegal dispossession of land’ or which inflict ‘environmental damage’ on affected communities, the Court’s Chambers could award reparations which explicitly respond to the ‘damage, loss and injury’ caused by that destruction. As noted by Special Rapporteur for environmental protection Marja Lehto:

No reparations entailing environmental remediation have so far been ordered, but the decision on the principles and procedures would seem to allow for such measures as well.\textsuperscript{74}

It is possible to ‘transpose some of the current provisions on reparations to accommodate justice for non-human life.’\textsuperscript{75} As further observed by Marja Lehto, ‘the effects of environmental damage are often felt both individually and collectively’,\textsuperscript{76} thus requiring reparations which are individual or collective in nature, or both. Indeed, environmental destruction in the context of conflict or atrocity can in some cases be situated within a deliberate attempt to destroy communities and groups, leading to associated harms that are communal, shared and with potentially intergenerational impacts. While it may not be possible to meet all demands, the experiences, harms, priorities and needs of victims should be understood and incorporated into reparation awards to the greatest extent possible.\textsuperscript{77} Prior to making an order, the Court may invite representations from victims, which may help in this regard.\textsuperscript{78}

In addition to consultation with victims, the Court may wish to consult with appropriate experts to assist in determining the scope and extent of environmental damage, loss and injury and to suggest various options concerning the appropriate types and modalities of reparations.\textsuperscript{79} Repairing the harm caused by environmental destruction undeniably poses specific challenges: complete restitution may be unlikely in many cases.\textsuperscript{80} However, potential avenues of restitution could include: (i) orders for restoration of any harm to the environment caused by the commission of the offence, if feasible, and if not, payment of the costs and expenses incurred in restoring the environment; (ii) costs for carrying out a specified project for the restoration or enhancement of the environment for the victims’ benefit; or/and (iii) payment of a specified

\textsuperscript{72} ICC OTP (n.27).
\textsuperscript{73} Rome Statute, art 75.
\textsuperscript{74} Second report of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Marja Lehto (71st session of the ILC (2019)), A/CN.4/728, 27 March 2019, 32.
\textsuperscript{75} Mwanza (n.22) 606.
\textsuperscript{76} Special Rapporteur (n.74) 32.
\textsuperscript{78} Rome Statute, Article 75(3), RPE, Rule 97(3).
\textsuperscript{79} ICC, Rules of Procedure and Evidence, r 97.
\textsuperscript{80} Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project (Hungary/Slovakia), \textit{Judgment}, ICJ Reports, 25 September 1997, pp. 77–78, para. 140: ‘The Court is mindful that, in the field of environmental protection, vigilance and prevention are required on account of the often irreversible character of damage to the environment and of the limitations inherent in the very mechanism of reparation of this type of damage.’
amount to an environmental trust or a specified environmental organization for the purpose of a specified restoration project. Examples can be found in the practice of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), where reparations have previously included environmental restitution, clean-up and reforestation programmes. In domestic systems, the practice of specialist environmental courts may also be instructive. For example, the New South Wales Land and Environment Court in Australia is empowered to award offenders to carry out specified projects for the restoration of the environment, as well as pay compensation. In relation to the practicalities of pursuing restoration, other domestic and regional frameworks may also provide guidance. For example, the US Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, and the European Union Environmental Liability Directive, both of which contain frameworks for the restoration of injured natural resources.

While templates for awarding restitution measures as reparations exist, the reality may be that full restitution is resource-intensive and requires specialist expertise and equipment. Depending on the nature of the harm, it may also require state involvement, which the ICC and TFV cannot guarantee. These limitations suggest that other or additional forms of reparation might be required. For example, the Court may consider awarding compensation and ordering fines or orders for the forfeitures of property which factor in harm to the environment. In the context of international law, the commentary to the articles on State responsibility, the International Law Institute, the UN Compensation Commission, the International Court of Justice, and the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes have each made clear that environmental destruction is compensable. Certainly, evaluating environmental

83 See e.g. Chief Executive, Office of Environment and Heritage v Coffs Harbour Hardwood Sales Pty Ltd. [2012] NSWLEC 52; Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage v Rinaldo (Nino) Lani [2012] NSWLEC 115, as discussed in White (n.9).
87 Lawry-White (n.45) 380.
88 Mwanza (n.22) 606.
90 The Institute of International Law, ‘Responsibility and Liability under International Law for Environmental Damage’ Session of Strasbourg (1997), art 23.
91 UN Compensation Commission, Governing Council, Report and Recommendations made by the Panel of Commissioners concerning the fifth instalment of ‘F4’ claims (S/AC.26/2005/10), 4 April 2005, para. 58.
93 Burlington Resources Inc. v. Republic of Ecuador, ICSID Case No. ARB/08/5, Decision on Counterclaims (Feb. 7, 2017).
Guidance on this process can be found in recent international law and international human rights law practice. For example, when addressing the environmental damage resulting from Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait, the Environmental Panel of the UN Compensation Commission acknowledged the relative lack of methods for evaluating damage, and instead relied on more general principles, ‘particularly the principle that reparation must, as far as possible, wipe out all the consequences of the illegal act’. This considered the nature of the harmful acts, harm, and affected area, as well as the area’s capacity for natural regeneration. Arguably the most experienced in considering reparations for environmental harms in the context of human rights abuses is the IACtHR, where indigenous communities have sought compensation for the loss of culturally significant land and natural resources. In this context, the Court has previously ordered compensation for material damage caused by ‘despoiled subsistence

destruction for the purpose of compensation may also pose challenges; valuations are likely to require expert testimony, site visits and appropriate evidence collection, and a lack of information, scientific certainty, and/or sufficient resources may inhibit the fact-finding and analysis necessary to calculate the nature of the harm. Nevertheless, where the practicalities of the situation allow for it, methods of assessment and valuation are possible.

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95 Burlington Resources (n.93) 423.
97 Kindji and Michael Faure (n.86).
98 UN Compensation Commission (n.91) para. 80.
101 Nicaragua (n.92) para 78.
102 Ibid, para 79.
103 Idem.
104 Ibid, para. 80.
105 Ibid, para. 81.
resources’ and ‘destruction’ of forests, as well as the immaterial damage caused to a people’s spiritual connection with their territory. While these various examples are distinct from the ICC in terms of their legal frameworks, they demonstrate that the compensability of environmental destruction is well recognised in international law, and that valuation approaches exist to enable compensation to be awarded.

The Court may also wish to look to other forms of reparation for environmental destruction, for three reasons. First, compensation alone might not be enough to deliver a sense of justice to victims without accompanying measures of satisfaction. Indeed, a sole focus on compensation has been deemed insufficient in other legal contexts; the ICJ’s focus on compensation in Costa Rica v. Nicaragua faced critiques from judges and academic commentators alike. Second, in line with the eco-sensitive approach advocated above, reparations should be delivered with an eye on long term environmental sustainability. As noted by Lee: “[t]he distribution of cash reparations alone will do little to bring about sustainable development, but will simply alleviate poverty temporarily.” And third, the nature of environmental destruction may be such that the harm has been experienced collectively, requiring an appropriately collective response. In addition to those highlighted in the context of eco-sensitivity, examples of additional forms of reparation can be found in the practice of the IACtHR. For example, it has previously awarded the creation of community development funds designed to enable eco-tourism developments, access to clean water and food security. Additional symbolic measures, such as apologies, acceptances of responsibility and acknowledgments of suffering could also be structured in a way which incorporated recognition of environmental harms. Awarding a combination of individual reparations in the form of compensation and wider ranging collective measures would be in

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108 Case of the Saramaka People v Suriname, Preliminary Objections, Merits, Reparations, Costs, Series C, No. 172 (Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 28 November 2007).
109 As observed by the Special Rapporteur Marja Lehto, investment arbitration tribunals have also decided a considerable number of environmental cases, see Kate Parlett and Sara Ewad, ‘Protection of the Environment in Investment Arbitration – a Double Edged Sword’ Kluwer Arbitration Blog, 22 August 2017, cited in Special Rapporteur (n.74) 63, fn 510.
114 Sarayaku case (n. 107); Saramaka case (n.108).
keeping with the ICC’s developing practice,\textsuperscript{116} and would increase the possibilities of adequately responding to the harm.\textsuperscript{117}

Awarding reparations for environmental destruction would acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between restoring the environment and repairing harm experienced by individuals living in that environment, with potentially wide-ranging impacts.\textsuperscript{118} However, if done without sensitivity for local context, dynamics and inequalities, such reparations would also contain risks of failing to improve the lives of victims or even resulting in further harm and inequality.\textsuperscript{119} In the final section, I therefore move to a more ambitious proposal, considering how the potential for long-term positive impacts might be enhanced by the application of an eco-sensitive lens to the ‘transformative’ reparations discourse.

**The Possibilities of Environmentally ‘Transformative’ Reparations**

Transformative justice has been defined as ‘transformative change that emphasizes local agency and resources, the prioritization of process rather than preconceived outcomes and the challenging of unequal and intersecting power relationships and structures of exclusion.’\textsuperscript{120} Emerging in part as a critique of transitional justice’s focus on a relatively narrow range of civil and political issues, transformative justice.\textsuperscript{121} In parallel to the development of transformative justice theories, advocates of transformative reparations have emerged. They note that for marginalised groups, the end of violence may precipitate a continuation of or return to positions of subjugation, and that reparations should therefore contribute to ‘overcoming structures of inequality and discrimination.’\textsuperscript{122} In the context of indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups, advocates and experts have underscored that land restitution and related reparations, while valued and even crucial, are insufficient without the simultaneous addressing of underlying discrimination and oppression.\textsuperscript{123}

Within the international criminal law literature, transformative reparations have been advocated for most notably in the context of widespread or systematic sexual violence, ‘where the occurrence of the crime reflects more ingrained structural discrimination and marginalisation of certain groups that precipitate such violence.’\textsuperscript{124} Feminist transitional


\textsuperscript{117} This has not been without challenges, see Balta, Bax and Letschert (n. 69).

\textsuperscript{118} Lawry-White (n.66) 376.


\textsuperscript{121} Matthew Evans and David Wilkins, ‘Transformative Justice, Reparations and Transatlantic Slavery’ 28(2) (2019) Social and Legal Studies 137.

\textsuperscript{122} UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN Women, *UN Guidance Note of the Secretary-General: Reparations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence* (2014).

\textsuperscript{123} Antkowiak (n.106) 56.

\textsuperscript{124} Moffett (n.42) 1211.
scholars have critiqued dominant forms of reparation, such as restitution, compensation and rehabilitation, for risking a return of women harmed during conflict to the positions of gendered inequality that may have preceded and contributed to conflict, and endured post-conflict. A significant contribution of transformative justice literature is to argue in favour of representative forms of justice (by increasing the numbers of women in positions of power), redistributive justice (which seeks to enhance economic equality), and recognition (through the designation of social and cultural standing or status).

It is arguable that similar principles are applicable when thinking about reparations for conflict- and atrocity-related environmental destruction. While measures of restitution and compensation may play an important role, an exclusive focus on such relatively narrow measures fails to situation conflict- and atrocity-related environmental destruction in its broader context. This often involves environmental harm pre- and post- conflict, as well as structural inequalities which shape who is able to access and use natural resources. For many targeted communities or marginalised groups, a return to the status quo would be a return to limited access to resources and lack of input into how the natural world is used and protected. The end of conflict may also involve a return or emergence of unsustainable resource exploitation, environmental degradation, and/or lack of protection for the environment, as states struggle to economically recover from the impacts of conflict. A failure to address these underlying environmental issues and inequalities can make a lasting peace less likely, plant the seeds for future human rights violations, and overlook the challenges facing those who were originally marginalised. Indeed, the environmental justice movement has worked since the 1960s to expose these inequalities, highlighting how disadvantaged groups suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation and unequal distribution of natural resources. Mirroring the calls from proponents of transformative justice, environmental justice is commonly described as requiring distributive justice, procedural justice and recognition.

127 Lawry-White (n.66) 367.
128 Idem.
130 UNEP, Sudan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment (UNEP 2007) 8.
131 See e.g. Robert Bullard, Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality (Westview Press 1990).
133 See e.g. David Schlosberg, Defining Environmental Justice: Theories, Movements and Nature (OUP 2009).
The ICC has been identified as an important organ for pursuing transformative reparations. This has been evident in its judgments. As stated in the amended Lubanga reparation decision, the principles of dignity, non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation mean that reparations should address underlying injustices and avoid replicating discriminatory practices or structures that predated the commission of the crimes. The TFV has similarly spoken of the importance of ensuring awards that do not exacerbate the root causes of the conflict. However, the possibilities for a court-ordered reparation to unilaterally fundamentally change underlying structural inequalities are undoubtedly limited, as acknowledged in scholarly critiques of gender transformative justice. As noted by Durbach and Chappell, achieving equal representation in decision making, a significant redistribution of economic resources and the removal of socially and culturally embedded bias requires extensive state-sponsored, collective measures. In the context of environmental transformative justice, while one can see the value of increasing the political representation and recognition of, for example, indigenous communities impacted by unequitable natural resource exploitation, this is likely beyond the power of a criminal justice institution, without accompanying state buy-in. Similarly, large-scale redistribution of natural resources and habitat management may require integration into peace agreements and post-conflict policies. The ICC cannot force a state to act and is therefore limited in what it can achieve. There are also significant resource limitations on what the Court can achieve in terms of repairing the environment. Drumbl has highlighted the challenges this poses to implementing environmental change:

Unless this criminal law apparatus is hooked into broader restorative remediation efforts, compensation efforts, and scientific expertise...the actual hard work of improving the damage to the environment will not take place.

However, such limitations do not mean that the ICC cannot seek to integrate environmental transformative justice to the extent available. For example, guarantees of non-repetition have the potential to become a useful tool in pursuing transformation; as Sandoval has argued, such measures ‘remain crucial to realizing the transformative potential of transitional justice.’ Guarantees of non-repetition are designed to prevent the reoccurrence of crimes by addressing the structural causes of violations, and are more commonly found in the context of human

134 Durbach and Chappell (n.126).
135 Ibid (n.62) 4.
138 Durbach and Chappell (n.126).
139 On the IACHR’s attempts and successes with regards to structural inequalities, see Antkowiak, 56-59.
rights violations and state-led reparations. However, the ICC’s reparations decision in the case of Al-Mahdi demonstrated the Court’s willingness to award such reparations in the context of individual accountability. Just as ‘effective measures to guarantee non-repetition of the attacks’ were considered appropriate in the context of attacks against specific cultural sites in Al Mahdi’s case, so might future Chambers consider the possibility of awarding guarantees against future harmful behaviour directed at the environment. In terms of implementation, the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation identify eight examples of possible modalities, including training for law enforcement, military and security forces; promoting mechanisms for conflict resolution, and reforming laws that enabled the violations to take place. Such measures offer the potential to entrench greater respect for the environment and fairer resource distribution post-conflict, potentially contributing to a more lasting peace. As noted by the Trial Chamber in Al Mahdi, such reparations may require consultation with governmental authorities, and would need to be tailored to the individual concerns regarding the natural resources. Again, guidance might be found in the practice of the IACtHR, where guarantees of non-repetition have been awarded in cases involving victim groups’ land.

It could be that some of the measures discussed in previous sections could also facilitate this type of environmental transformative agenda. For example, KESAN has described the Salween Peace Park as aiming to contribute to conflict transformation by expanding the conversation around ‘governance’ to address issues of ‘militarization, conflict, displacement, resource capture, and destructive development’. Emerging environmental peacebuilding theory argues that cooperation over environmental resources and biodiversity management can help prevent the outbreak of conflict and enable peacebuilding to promote a transition towards peaceful and sustainable development. Facilitating the treatment, management and development of natural habitats could simultaneously develop biodiversity and human welfare both to meet the needs of the present generation and to improve the standard of living, sanitation and social, environmental and political stability for future generations. It might be that a more holistic, eco-sensitive approach to reparations might ‘deflect, subsume and eventually even transcend entrenched social conflicts’.

More broadly, representative/procedural justice elements can be incorporated by ensuring that those with an understanding of the specific environmental context in which violence occurred

142 Ibid.
143 Al Mahdi Reparations Order (n.116) para 67.
145 Al Mahdi Reparations Order (n.116) para 67.
147 Salween Peace Park Initiative (n.56).
149 Milburn (n.61).
150 Ong (n.129) 222.
are heard prior to reparation orders being made and during the design and implementation of reparative projects.\textsuperscript{151} Steps can be taken to identify the intersections of ethnicity/race/clan, class, sexuality, nationality, dis/ability and employment status which influence access to natural resources, to ensure that discriminatory practices of exclusions are not reproduced via the provision of reparations.\textsuperscript{152} Adopting an eco-sensitive approach to design and implementation as advocated above could also contribute to mainstreaming environmental concerns into the TFV’s operations.\textsuperscript{153} While likely incapable of natural resource redistribution without state cooperation and involvement, a focus on reparative measures which have the potential to bring about long-term positive impacts on the environment could have lasting benefits for targeted communities that may have historically lacked access to natural resources.

**Conclusion**

With so much already expected of the ICC, it might be fair to query whether there is ‘any place within the already congested transitional justice agenda…to consider the addition of environmental justice?’\textsuperscript{154} One might also question whether a system designed to focus on grave human rights violations such as international criminal law is equipped to protect the environment on its own terms.\textsuperscript{155} Certainly, there are both practical and conceptual challenges associated with encompassing environmental destruction into the ICC’s remit. The introduction of a new crime against the environment seems far away, if not impossible, and the existing core crimes include little recognition of environmental destruction. The TFV faces resource restrictions and implementation challenges that inevitably impact upon its ability to deliver meaningful reparation and measures of assistance to victimised communities. These challenges cannot be ignored. Yet, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that there are ways and means of adopting greater environmental awareness into the ICC’s reparative framework, ranging from an increased eco-sensitivity in human-centric reparation and assistance measures, to reparation awards which explicitly respond to environmental harm, to pursuing an environmentally transformative reparations agenda.

Even at its most effective, the ICC and TFV are transitional justice mechanisms, with a limited ability to address the broader injustices, inequalities and structural forms of oppression that may have enabled the perpetration of core crimes and related environmental destruction. Proponents of broader theories of transformative justice have critiqued arguments which focus on addressing broader contexts of violence only inasmuch as existing transitional justice tools can be adapted to do so,\textsuperscript{156} and would undoubtedly critique my suggestions on that basis. While

\textsuperscript{151} Durbach and Chappell (n.118) 551.
\textsuperscript{152} Idem.
\textsuperscript{153} See Durbach and Chappell (n.118) 555 noting the value of the Trust Fund’s ‘gender mainstreaming’ to the project of gender transformative reparations.
\textsuperscript{154} Idem.
agreeing that more radical measures are necessary, I nonetheless argue that it is vital that we continue to explore diverse and creative ways to respond to environmental harms wherever possible.\textsuperscript{157} The interconnections between conflict, atrocity and environment mean that the neglect of environmental destruction has potentially long-term and severe implications for individuals and communities recovering from mass violence and human rights violations. The wellbeing of humans cannot be achieved in isolation from the wellbeing of nature;\textsuperscript{158} indeed, human rights and the protection of the environment are increasingly recognised as interdependent and indivisible.\textsuperscript{159} Greater awareness of these interconnections in measures of reparation and victim assistance is therefore a necessary, if modest, first step if the impacts of mass violence are to be meaningfully and sustainably addressed. Furthermore, it is important to note that these interconnections impact on all of us. Environmental degradation risks not only to the emergence or resurgence of conflict, but larger international security threats through its contribution to global warming and associated changes to the physical and geopolitical world. Integrating environmental considerations into our responses to conflict is therefore not only important to the wellbeing of victimised impacted communities, but a development and security imperative.\textsuperscript{160}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{157} See also Dinah Shelton, ‘Legitimate and Necessary: Adjudicating Human Rights Violations Related to Activities Causing Environmental Harm or Risk’ (2015) 6(2) \textit{Journal of Human Rights and the Environment} 139-155.
  \item \textsuperscript{158} Mwanza (n.22) 593.
  \item \textsuperscript{159} Environment and Human Rights (State Obligations in Relation to the Environment in the Context of the Protection and Guarantee of the Rights to Life and to Personal Integrity—Interpretation and Scope of Articles 4(1) and 5(1) in Relation to Articles 1(1) and 2 of the American Convention on Human Rights), IACtHR Advisory Opinion no OC-23/18, Ser A (No 23), 15 November 2017
  \item \textsuperscript{160} Milburn (n.41) 876.
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