



ForestDefender

A Tool For Understanding Your Rights

By the Center For International
Environmental Law

www.forestdefender.org

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CIEL and ForestDefender

- CIEL was founded 25 years ago to use the power of the law to protect the environment, promote human rights, and ensure a just and sustainable society.
- Focus on safeguarding communities and ecosystems in the development of REDD+ activities
- One approach: Develop legal tools, such as ForestDefender, and build capacity



Climate Change, Forests and Rights

- Forests play a role in climate change, protecting biodiversity and in supporting the lives and livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities
- But, forests are threatened
- Opportunity in people and in governance
 - Enabling laws and standards to protect the rights of affected communities and avoid illegal deforestation are strong and well-enforced



What is REDD+?

- A mechanism that includes forest protection in tackling climate change.
- Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
- Also includes *conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks*



ForestDefender's Added Value

- Communities and partners in REDD+ countries are provided with tools to evaluate national REDD+ policies against international standards and best practices
- Supports greater consistency between domestic laws and relevant international laws and standards,
- Empowers forest dependent communities to better defend their own rights and their own forests



History of ForestDefender

- Ongoing requests to understand if X country has ratified X international legal instrument
 - If so, what rights must be respected
 - If rights are violated, what redress mechanisms are available
- What was once a chart...

Country	Conv. on Biological Diversity	Univ. Decl. on Human Rights ¹	Int. Conv. on Econ., Soc. & Cult. Rights	Int. Conv. on Civ. & Pol. Rights	Int. Conv. on the Elim. of Racial Discr.	ILO Conv. 169	UN Decl on the Rights of Indig. Peoples	World Cult. and Nat. Heritage Conv.	Conv. on Safeguard. of Int. Cult. Heritage	Conv. on Prot. & Prom. of Cultural Diversity	Conv. on the Rights of the Child	Conv. on the Elim. Discr. Against Women	American Conv. on Human Rights	African Charter on Human and Peoples'	UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.16	CBD Decision XI/19
Argentina*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Bangladesh*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Abstained	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Benin*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Bhutan*	Party	Applies	X	X	Signatory	X	Abstained	Party	Party	X	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Bolivia*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Brazil*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Burkina Faso*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Cambodia*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Cameroon*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Central African Republic*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	X	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Chile*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Colombia*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Abstained & now endorses	Party	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Congo-Brazzaville*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Costa Rica*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Côte d'Ivoire*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Not Present	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Democratic Republic of the Congo**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Ecuador*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
El Salvador*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	X	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Equatorial Guinea* (currently	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Not Present	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Ethiopia*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	X	Not Present	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Gabon*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Ghana**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	X	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Guatemala*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Guyana**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Honduras*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Indonesia**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Kenya*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Abstained	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Lao PDR**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Liberia*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	X	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Madagascar*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Mexico**	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Mongolia*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Mozambique*	Party	Applies	X	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Myanmar*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	X	X	X	X	Voted in Favor	Party	X	X	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Nepal**	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	X	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Nicaragua*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	Party	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Nigeria*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Abstained	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Pakistan*	Party	Applies	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	X	Party	Party	X	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD
Panama*	Party	Applies (Voted in favor)	Party	Party	Party	X	Voted in Favor	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	Party	X	Party to the UNFCCC	Party to the CBD

Is now an interactive webtool!

The screenshot shows the ForestDefender website. At the top is a dark navigation bar with a home icon and menu items: ABOUT, HOW TO USE, COUNTRIES, INSTRUMENTS & FRAMEWORKS, ACCOUNTABILITY, and CUSTOMER SEARCH. The main header features the title "ForestDefender" in large black font, with the subtitle "A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS" and "By the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)". Below the header are three prominent buttons: "SEARCH RIGHTS BY COUNTRY" (red), "SEARCH RIGHTS BY INSTRUMENT" (green), and "BUILD CUSTOM SEARCH" (dark blue). The page is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "OVERVIEW" and contains a paragraph describing the tool as a legal database of international human rights and obligations relevant to forest governance. Below this is a sub-section "ForestDefender is your go-to place if you want to:" followed by a bulleted list of four key features. The right column is titled "VIDEO TUTORIAL" and includes a paragraph about watching a guide. Below the text is a video player showing a thumbnail of the ForestDefender interface with a play button overlay.

ABOUT HOW TO USE COUNTRIES INSTRUMENTS & FRAMEWORKS ACCOUNTABILITY CUSTOMER SEARCH

ForestDefender

A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS

By the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

SEARCH RIGHTS BY COUNTRY

SEARCH RIGHTS BY INSTRUMENT

BUILD CUSTOM SEARCH

OVERVIEW

ForestDefender is a legal database that provides a snapshot of international human rights and obligations relevant to forest governance. It captures the large amount of information found from various sources and presents it in a way that is easily accessible to and usable by lawyers, activists and community members alike.

ForestDefender is your go-to place if you want to:

- Find information about a specific country's involvement in REDD+
- Discover what international obligations your country has to its people or extrajurisdictionally
- Build a stronger command of a particular right
- Gain a better understanding of the rights implicated by a specific legal

VIDEO TUTORIAL

Watch our quick and easy tutorial about how to use our rights search functionality.

CIEL, Forest Defender Demo Video

ForestDefender

SEARCH RIGHTS BY COUNTRY

SEARCH RIGHTS BY INSTRUMENT

BUILD CUSTOM SEARCH



OVERVIEW

- *ForestDefender* is a legal database that provides a snapshot of international human rights and obligations relevant to forest governance.
- It captures the large amount of information found from various sources
- It presents it in a way that is easily accessible to and usable by lawyers, activists and community members alike.



Your Go-To-Place

- To find information about a specific country's involvement in REDD+
- To discover what international obligations your country has to its people or extraterritorially
- To build a stronger command of a particular right
- To gain a better understanding of the rights implicated by a specific legal instrument



ForestDefender's Audience

- Generally developed for an audience that is already familiar with international legal instruments, such as in-country lawyers and certain activists and community members.
- We are often asked: How do you envision indigenous people and their advocates using this site?
 - To recognize, defend, advocate and enforce internationally-protected rights.
 - Used as a guide to understand how to hold violators of these rights accountable through the various human rights and international financial institution mechanisms.



ForestDefender's Compliment

- A community resource guide designed for community leaders that provides an overview of REDD+ relevant rights. It acts as a complement to ForestDefender.
 - Based on a community needs assessment of three indigenous communities in Honduras.
- Moving forward, we will use these tools as part of our advocacy and we expect further dissemination to occur through our partners and networks.



Disclaimer!

- The information provided here is intended as a *guide* to inform you of the rights and obligations that may apply in a forest governance context.
- It does not constitute legal advice and is not a replacement for consulting appropriate international or national lawyers after you have conducted your research.
- When an instrument makes reference to another instrument, the rights from that reference instrument are not included in your search results.



ForestDefender is a Database

- Guided Searches
 - By country
 - By instrument
- Custom search
 - By a combination of key terms, countries and instruments of your choosing
- You get to choose how you want to engage with the information as we provide different ways of searching the website.



What kind of information?

- Information contained in international legal instruments relevant for forest governance, what rights are implicated by them, and to which major REDD+ countries those instruments apply.
- The countries were chosen based on their participation in key international REDD+ processes.



Where did we get the information?

- The country-related information comes from the [Voluntary REDD+ Database](#).
- The information on international legal instruments comes directly from the sources: the treaties, declarations and decisions themselves.
- Similarly, the information related to accountability mechanisms and treaty bodies come from each of the official websites for those processes.
- *ForestDefender* also provide users with the opportunity to search the information using key terms that CIEL has interpreted and tagged.
 - In developing these key terms, we used a “rights-based approach



Countries included

- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Benin
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Burkina Faso
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chile
- Colombia
- Congo Brazzaville
- Costa Rica
- Cote d'Ivoire
- DRC
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Lao PDR
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Mexico
- Mongolia
- Mozambique
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Solomon Islands
- South Sudan
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Uganda
- Vanuatu
- Vietnam
- Zambia



Instruments Included

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- International Labour Organization's Convention # 169 (ILO 169)
- American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR)
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR)
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions (CPPCDE)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH)
- World Heritage Convention (WHC)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- UNFCCC Decision
- CBD Decision XI/19



Key Terms

Key Term	Brief Description
Access to/Right to Information	tagged when provisions deal with education and training, freedom of information, and in situations where the government has to ensure individuals or communities can understand and interpret process. Both passive and active access to information are tagged
Right to Participate	tagged in provisions that deal with consultation requirements and participation/inclusion in decision-making that affect individuals and/or groups of people.
Right to Self-Determination	tagged for provisions related to a collective peoples' ability to exert control over their land and livelihood, to autonomy and sovereignty related to political status and social, cultural and economic development



How to Search

- What are the different ways of searching on this website?
- How can I find out which international legal instruments apply to a specific country?
- How can I find information about specific legal obligations for a specific country?
- Let's go!

www.forestdefender.org

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest covering a hillside. A dirt path winds through the trees. The word "Accountability" is overlaid in white text in the center of the image.

Accountability

- The page itself: There is a description of the accountability mechanism as well as a web link where you can find additional information directly from the source.
 - Additional links to guides or materials



Tips!

- FAQ page answers questions such as:
 - What are the differences between a treaty, declaration, and a decision? And what does it mean for an instrument to apply to a country?
- Helpful tips by page
- Reminder that you can share and print your search results



Don't just take my word for it!

- **“ForestDefender seems to be, at my point of view, a very useful tools. Not only for people involving in REDD+ process, but for every one who need to know about international lows, those signed by his country”**
- “The website is incredibly intuitive and extremely handy to use, it has been of great use form my studies”
- “The great thing about the website is that one can find all the applicable instruments related to the listed countries in one place”
- “The guided search questions relating to specific elements of the legal instruments, informed by a human rights based approach are thoughtfully crafted, very comprehensive and extremely relevant especially to Indigenous Peoples”
- “very useful for our work and lives of indigenous peoples in”
- “This is AMAZING!!! Congratulations. I would very much like to use this tool to support”



Next Steps...

'Cause the work never ends!

- Continued dissemination and trainings
- Translation into other languages
- Flesh out the accountability page
 - In collaboration with partner organizations
- Further explanation about the decisions of governing bodies (COP decisions)
- Add additional information to country pages
- Additional international instruments
- Add regional instruments
- Additional platform for sharing experience with applying legal instruments and lessons learned (brief case studies)
- Link to other tools/resources focusing on domestic laws



Thank YOU!

- Vision: Kristin Hite
- Partner in Crime: Niranjali Amerasinghe
- Brainstorming and Comms support: Amanda Kistler
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 - Internal: Marcos Orellana, Alyssa Johl
 - External: Erica Lennon, Kristin Hite, Juan Carlos Carrillo, Daniela Rey, Jennifer Laughlin, Didier Devers, Kimaren Riamit, Joell Mukungu, Mario Vallejo, Alessandro Guasti
- Photos: Senson Mark from PNG Eco-Forestry Forum
- Design and Programming: Rootid
- Funder: Ford Foundation
- Dissemination and Future Use: Amazon Watch and...
- YOU!!!