



# Intersection #3

## Safety and defence

“Our partners were receiving threats and being surveilled due to their land defence work, and it was happening through digital means. Their phones were intercepted, and through computers as well.”

**Environmental activist with roots in food justice and feminist youth politics**

The **persecution** of those resisting land acquisition and forest encroachment by extractive industries has been going on for a long time, but digital tools' ability to **follow, surveil, and collect information** without individuals' knowledge has expanded governments' and companies' abilities to **intimidate, harass**, and in some cases even to **murder**, dissenters.

As **threats** continue to evolve, and as organisations around the world report **increased attacks**, keeping up with digital security needs requires continued time, attention, and financial resources, and **long-term support** for organisations is still largely missing.

“...with the criminalisation of the people who speak out and the legacy of this intersection (between data activists and environmental actors) ... there is a growing but rare convergence – they could really help each other strengthen their strategy, but they don't have the time to explore synergies and are being isolated.”

- Research participant

Environmental defenders and environmental organisations also often have to face off against corporations in court, but grants do not often cover **legal support**.



## Opportunities for the digital rights space to support the capacity, safety and well-being of CJ-EJ groups

There are a number of areas where important work happening across DR and EJ-CJ spaces would benefit from further support and expansion. This could include include, among other things:

- Supporting the **long-term digital security capacity** of climate movements/land defenders
- Providing funding that covers ongoing tech and security needs, including the **maintenance of digital** infrastructure and the hiring and maintenance of IT/security staff or consultants
- Providing **legal support**
- Collaboratively and proactively exploring risks, and creating and **funding plans for mitigation** (which could include legal defence, sustained digital security interventions and more).



## Find more intersections, opportunities and recommendations in our report:

At the confluence of digital rights and climate & environmental justice – a landscape review

• [engn.it/climatejusticedigitalrights](https://engn.it/climatejusticedigitalrights)



About this info sheet: In 2022 The Engine Room, in collaboration with Ford Foundation, Ariadne and Mozilla Foundation, conducted research designed to support funders in advancing work at the intersection between Digital Rights (DR) and Environmental & Climate Justice (EJ-CJ). Our findings identified six cross-cutting themes, five key intersections, and a substantial set of recommendations for those interested in supporting work in this area.

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