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Moral Development of Eco-Martyrs

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VCU Moral Development of Eco-Martyrs

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Laws as Social Contracts

Constable Jagadeesan

Death Date: May 6, 2018

Jagadeesan was a constable working in the Vijayanagaram area in Tamil Nadu when he was sent with other police officials to collect details on illegal sand miners and, ultimately, arrest some in the act. He was found dead assaulted to the head by a possible hammer and torch which were found in the general vicinity of his body. There were three suspects that were taken into custody not long after they found the body. Activists claimed that police were in cahoots with politicians that condone the illegal sand mining, but Jagadeesan's death seems to prove otherwise.



Disregards Consequences for Morals

Faustin Biriko Nzabakurikiza

Death Date: April 1, 2018

As Forest Rangers for the Virunga National Park, he and his colleagues were assaulted by armed men invading the park on their normal morning patrol. It is likely that these men were either poachers or loggers for charcoal. Nzabakurikiza died because of the injuries he sustained during their scrimmage and is only 1 of 175 rangers to be killed in the park over the last twenty years.



Hold Universal Morals

Benjamin Ramos

Death Date: November 6, 2018

Ramos was a human rights activist and lawyer that gave legal advice to those convicted of human rights violations. One evening when he took a break, he was shot multiple times by assailants aboard a motorcycle. Like others, his killing is believed to be acts of the government. Ramos was wounded on his back and chest on both sides, and died en route to the hospital.



Natural Leaders

Kateryna Handziuk

Death Date: November 4, 2018

Handziuk worked as an anti-corruption activist and advisor to the mayor of Kherson in the Ukraine. In July, she was the victim of an acid attack conducted using a liter of sulphuric acid while she was outside of her home in Kherson. Over a third of her body was damaged and she went through eleven surgeries. While she was in the hospital, she continued to call for government investigations into violence against activists like her. Handziuk actively criticized police forces in her city which may have caused them to retaliate.

Over the past 18 years, close to 2,000 individuals have been murdered in attempts to preserve the natural world. Those who have carried out the killings are corrupt individuals or institutions that wish to discard and destroy the environment for personal gain and wealth. For the past two years, we have been studying these venerable Eco-Martyrs and their efforts to preserve the ecosystems and communities around them. Today, we are commenting on how these late heroes exemplify Lawrence Kohlberg's final two stages of Moral Development, the Post-Conventional stages. The four individuals seen above, as well as their numerous counterparts are all consciously taking action to promote the stability and well-being of the environment around them while simultaneously bolstering the culture of the communities they belong to. These traits are indicative of individuals who have transcended the first two levels of moral development. It is a shame for us to have lost such forward-thinking individuals but it would be a greater dishonor to let these individuals die in vain and continue to reap rewards with no thought as to how it affects the world around us.