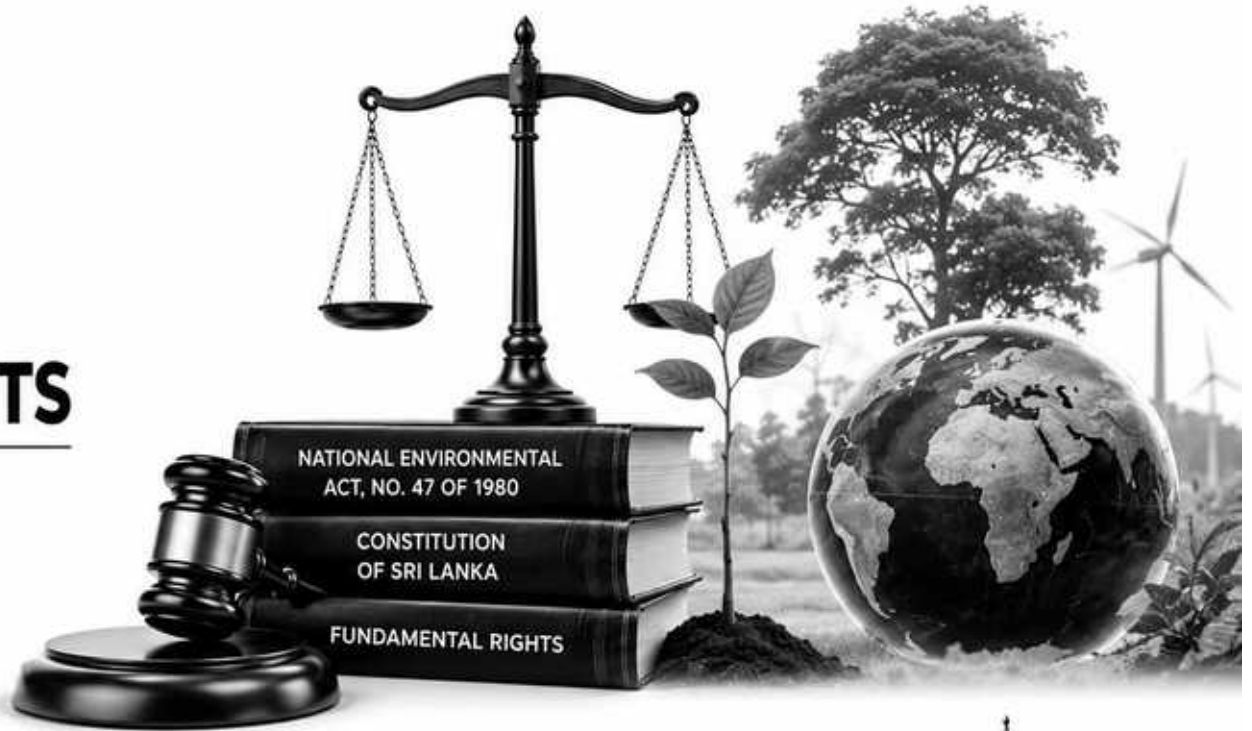




# CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

The right to live in a healthy and clean environment is a fundamental human right for every citizen. To protect natural resources, forests, water sources, and the public environment from destruction, Sri Lanka has enacted the National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980.

Environmental pollution affects not only a few individuals, but the entire society. It is considered a "Public Nuisance". Therefore, citizens have the right to take action against it. Below are your rights and the steps you can take:




**PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.**  
It is our collective responsibility.



**PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES.**  
For present and future generations.



**POLLUTION IS A CRIME.**  
It is a public nuisance and punishable by law.



**YOUR RIGHTS.**  
Your voice can create change.



### KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:

- ✓ Right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
- ✓ Right to be informed about environmental decisions.
- ✓ Right to participate in environmental decision-making.
- ✓ Right to access justice in environmental matters.
- ✓ Right to take action against pollution and environmental harm.



**A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT IS YOUR RIGHT. PROTECT IT. RESPECT IT. PRESERVE IT.**



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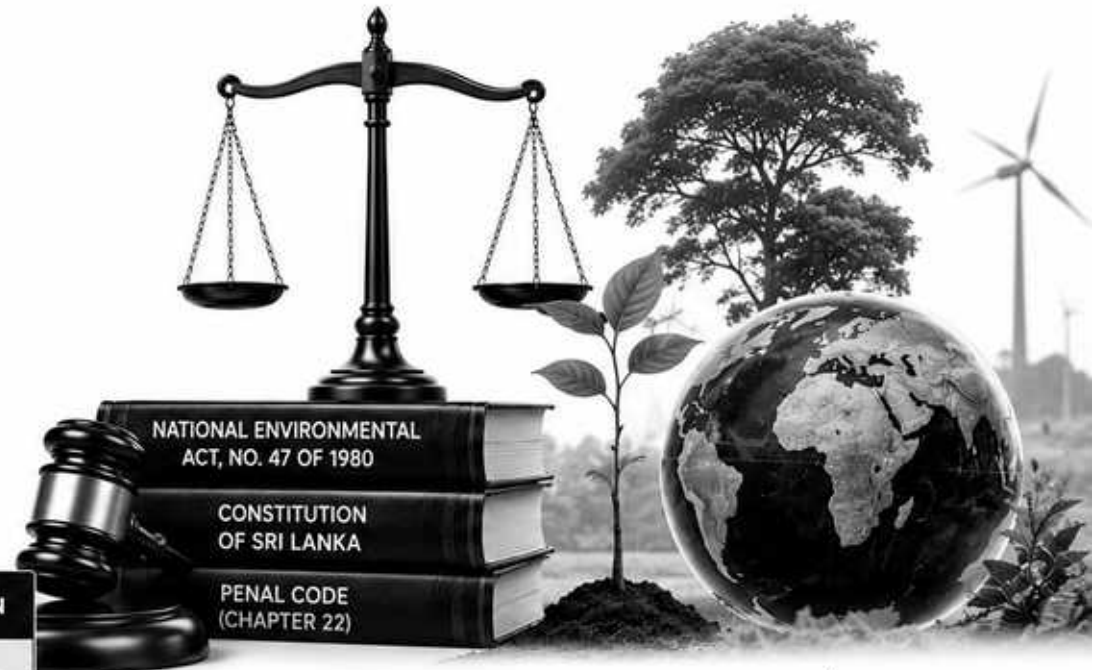


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## 3 ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENCES UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ACT

The National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980 and the general laws of Sri Lanka (Penal Code) strictly prohibit activities that harm the environment and public health.



**1 POLLUTION OF PUBLIC WADER SOURCES**



Discharging toxic chemicals, industrial effluents, sewage, or any waste into rivers, canals, tanks, or groundwater systems is a serious offence.

- ✓ Every factory must have an Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) issued by the Central Environment Authority.

**2 ILLEGAL WASTE DISPOSAL**



Dumping or burning waste, plastic, or hazardous electronic waste (E-waste) in public places, roadsides, or protected areas is prohibited.

- ✓ This contaminates air and soil and endangers public health.

**3 NOISE POLLUTION**




Operating factories, commercial establishments, loudspeakers, or machines in residential areas or during events beyond the permitted decibel (dB) level is illegal.

- ✓ This is considered a public nuisance and interferes with the freedom and well-being of people.

**YOUR RIGHTS AS A CITIZEN**



- ✓ Right to a clean and healthy environment.
- ✓ Right to be protected from pollution and hazards.
- ✓ Right to information and participation in environmental decisions.
- ✓ Right to take legal action against offenders.
- ✓ Your actions today protect our tomorrow.



# HOW TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

When environmental destruction or a public nuisance occurs in your area, you can take action through the following official channels.



## 1 COLLECT EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

**This is the first step.**

Take photos or videos showing the pollution. Note down the exact location, date, time, and details of the person or institution responsible for the pollution.



## 2 COMPLAIN TO THE LOCAL POLICE STATION

**This is the second step.**

For urgent public nuisances such as excessive noise at night, open burning of waste, or dumping waste on roads, contact your nearest Police Station, the **Environmental Police** unit, or dial **119** immediately. Police have the power to act under **Section 261 of the Penal Code (Public Nuisance)**.

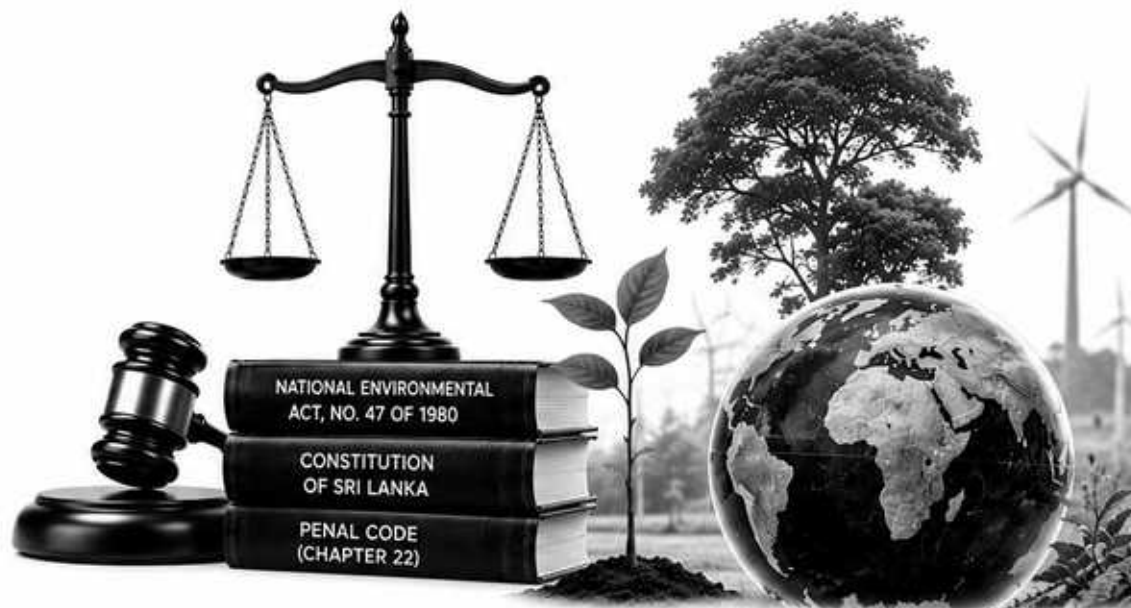


## 3 REPORT TO THE CENTRAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY (CEA)

**This is the third step.**

For large-scale and systematic pollution such as toxic smoke or chemical waste discharged into rivers by factories, submit a written complaint to the **Central Environmental Authority (CEA)** head office in Colombo or your district CEA office, or call the **1980 hotline**.

They will conduct an investigation and take action, including suspension or cancellation of the offender's environmental licence.



**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE**  
For urgent public nuisances

**119**

Available 24/7

Examples:

- Noise Pollution (especially at night)
- Open burning of waste
- Dumping waste on roads or public places



**CENTRAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY (CEA)**  
For large-scale and systematic pollution

**1980**

Hotline (24/7)

Examples:

- Toxic smoke from factories
- Chemical waste discharged into rivers or canals
- Other serious environmental violations

**YOUR VOICE.  
YOUR ACTION.  
OUR ENVIRONMENT.**



A clean and healthy environment is our right and our responsibility.



PROTECT TODAY. PRESERVE TOMORROW.  
**A BETTER ENVIRONMENT, A BETTER FUTURE.**



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# PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION (PIL) IN THE SUPREME COURT

Large-scale projects or negligence by government authorities can cause environmental destruction that affects the entire country or a large part of the population. In such cases, any citizen or voluntary organization can file a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** in the Supreme Court.



## 1. NATURE OF A PIL

- Personal gain is not required.
- Unlike a normal case, proving personal harm is not necessary. Any concerned citizen or organization can file a PIL for the well-being of the public and nature.



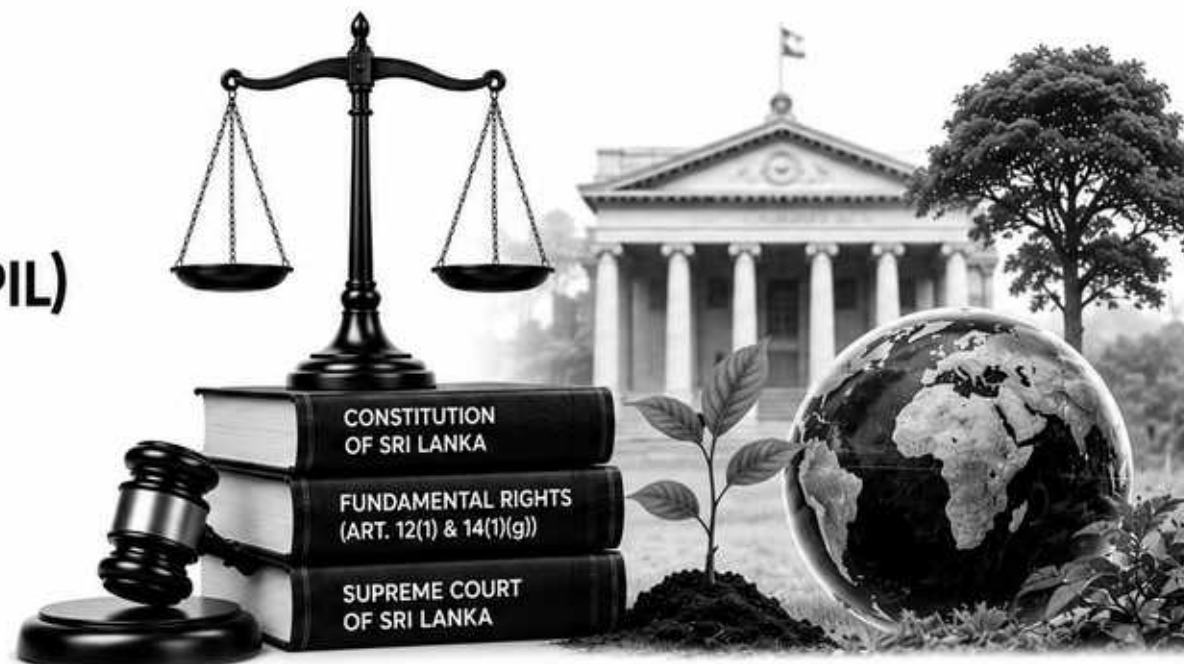
## 2. LINK WITH FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FR)

- Environmental destruction can be presented as a violation of Fundamental Rights in the Constitution.
- Article 12(1) – Equality before the law and equal protection.
- Article 14(1)(g) – Right to life includes the right to a clean and healthy environment.



## 3. RELIEF THROUGH COURT ORDERS

- Through a PIL, the Supreme Court can issue:
  - ✓ Injunctions to immediately stop environmentally harmful projects.
  - ✓ Orders to restore the environment to its original state.
  - ✓ Orders to compensate affected communities.



## WHY PIL MATTERS

- ✓ Protects the environment for present and future generations.
- ✓ Ensures government accountability and transparency.
- ✓ Empowers citizens to stand up for public and environmental rights.
- ✓ Strengthens democracy and the rule of law.

“

A healthy environment is not a privilege of the few, but a right of all.



OUR ENVIRONMENT. OUR RIGHTS. OUR FUTURE.  
STAND FOR NATURE. STAND FOR JUSTICE.



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# CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Along with our rights, **Article 28(f)** of the Constitution of Sri Lanka clearly states that "The protection and preservation of nature and its resources is the **fundamental duty of every citizen of Sri Lanka.**"



OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CITIZENS	WHAT WE CAN PRACTICALLY DO
 <b>WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>	 Separate biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste at home and hand it over systematically to local authorities (Municipal Council/Pradeshiya Sabha). Reduce the use of plastic.
 <b>PROTECT PUBLIC RESOURCES</b>	 When visiting forests, beaches, and sacred/historical sites such as Sigiriya and Sri Pada, do not litter or use polythene. Keep these places clean and protect our natural and cultural heritage.
 <b>ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	 If a new factory or industrial project is being built in your area, be vigilant and ask whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA Report) has been obtained.
 <b>PROMOTE A CULTURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CARE</b>	 Educate others, especially children and youth, about the importance of environmental protection. Together, let's build a cleaner, greener Sri Lanka.

“  
 The environment is not an inheritance from our ancestors, but a loan we have taken from our children.  
 —  
 Protecting it is not only a legal obligation, but the highest responsibility of humanity.”

