

Armed Conflicts: Environmental Destruction and the Limits of International Law

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how armed conflicts recently starts in the Middle East can cause serious environmental damage and require the examination on the role of international law in addressing these impacts. Despite the existence of legal principles and treaties aimed at protecting the environment during war, environmental destruction continues to occur in conflict zones. This is doctrinal research. The results of research derive from literature review on available primary data and online contribution and availability of access. The objective of this article looks at the overview of the relationship between the relevancy of international law and the destruction of environment in zone of conflict recently activated by the act of USA, Isreal and other supporting States upon Iran and Palestine and it's allied around the Middle East. At the end, the article manages to shows; The impact from the conduct of military operations causing direct and indirect environmental harm and severely weaken the protection of environment which were built by treaties as early as 1945. Furthermore, the United Nations specific organ of International Court of Justice, in its Advisory capacity has determined that the act of States of Israel defending itself under self-defense, which starts the armed conflict is illegal. Furthermore, Israel's policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) according to ICJ decision in 2024, violate jus in bello. The armed conflict in the Middle East joined by US, UK and some European Union States, and that armed conflict witness by all independence States around the world, is actually based on illegal act in International Law. In the conclusion the impact of armed conflict, which the United Nation Organization, identifies to begins in 2022 causing destruction which felt worst on environment, and its degrading civilians' life and crushed peace, safety and harmony on what is understood as modern civilizations.

Keywords: Armed Conflict, International Law, Environmental Destruction, Impact of Harm, States

INTRODUCTION

Armed conflict causes extensive environmental damage through direct destruction from weapons, pollution from military activity, and the breakdown of environmental governance. These impacts include contamination of soil and water with toxic materials, destruction of ecosystems, air pollution, and long-term hazards that hinder agricultural productivity and human health. While the human cost of war is undeniable and profound, the environment also suffers immense and often-overlooked consequences. Beyond the immediate destruction, conflicts disrupt ecosystems, deplete natural resources, pollute the environment, and jeopardize the health of our planet for generations to come.

Before the armed conflict, the three biggest environmental problems facing the world today are the "triple planetary crisis": climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. These interconnected issues are already driving rapid, dangerous shifts in global ecosystems, threatening biodiversity, and creating severe risks for human health. The Climate Change (Global Warming) is driven by greenhouse gas emissions, this causes extreme weather, rising sea levels, and ecosystem instability, often cited as the most urgent crisis. The Biodiversity Loss causing the deforestation, land degradation, and habitat destruction are causing massive reductions in plant and animal species, threatening natural systems that provide food and medicine. The Pollution

& Waste on Air, water, and soil pollution that including a massive increase in plastic waste posing toxic risks to human and ecological health. The pollution brings crisis include water scarcity and natural resource depletion.

BACKGROUND

The armed conflict recently occurring in the 21 st century seems to indicates that the Earth has no law on war or armed conflict. This is not true.

The Law of War Does Exist Under International Law since 1700. Pre-1919: Resorting to force was largely seen as a legitimate way of settling disputes. Post-WWI (1919-1928): The Covenant of the League of Nations and the Briand-Kellogg Pact began formalizing restrictions on war. Post-WWII (Late 1940s): The modern adoption of these terms accelerated after 1945 to separate the legality of war itself (*jus ad bellum*) from the rules of humanitarian conduct (*jus in bello*), often now called international humanitarian law. 1977 Additional Protocols: Further solidified the application of *jus in bello* (international humanitarian law) regardless of the legality of the *jus ad bellum*.

The twin legal concepts of *jus ad bellum* (law on war) and *jus in bello* (law in war) were established as distinct, modern terms primarily in the late 1940s following WWII, though their roots grew throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. They differentiate between the legality of initiating conflict versus conduct during it. 19th & Early 20th Century: War and peace were treated as separate legal regimes, but the clear separation of these terms was not yet established in doctrine. *Jus in bello* applies to all sides of a conflict regardless of the legality of *jus ad bellum*. Jurists' scholar Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) introduce the key figure in developing international law surrounding the Conduct of war. ***Jus ad bellum*** refers to the international law governing the legal justification for initiating war (the "right to war"), primarily focusing on self-defense or UN Security Council authorization. Derived from the UN Charter (Article 2(4) & 51), it prohibits the use of force unless in self-defense or authorized by the UN Security Council. *Jus ad bellum* focuses on the reasons for fighting. *Jus ad bellum* involves legal arguments about aggression.

Jus in bello is international humanitarian law regulating conduct within a conflict (the "laws of war"), regardless of the war's legality. Distinguishes between civilians and combatants, proportionality of attacks, and prohibition of unnecessary suffering. *jus in bello* focuses on how the fight is conducted. *jus in bello* focuses on humanitarian protection.

The UN Charter, 1945 through Article 2(4) establishes a foundational prohibition on the threat or use of force in international relations, primarily It mandates that member states resolve disputes peacefully and bans military actions against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, acting as a cornerstone of modern international law. Legal Standing: 193 member states have ratified the Charter, giving its principles on peace and human dignity universal validity, though disputes remain on its application and the legitimacy of exceptions. USA, Isreal and Palestine and Iran are members of UN Organization. The prohibition is designed to prevent war and ensure that military force is not used to resolve conflicts.

Article 2(4): Prohibits the "threat or use of force" against another state, expanding beyond the old legal concept of "war" to include all forms of military aggression. Exceptions: The Charter recognizes only two exceptions: A. Self-Defense: Article 51 preserves the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs, until the Security Council takes action. B. Security Council Authorization: The UN Security Council can authorize military action under Chapter VII to maintain or restore international peace and security.

1946 Geneva Convention on law of war consist of 4 conventions. The relevant to act of war just after UN Charters were introduced. Main concerned of Geneva Convention is its protects hospitals, schools, and religious buildings, strictly limiting their targeting unless uses for military actions. These sites lose protection if used for military purposes (e.g., ammunition storage, firing positions). However, targeting requires proportionality and precautions to minimize civilian harm. Rules, including the Geneva Conventions, mandate to treating civilians humanely, forbidding their use as human shields, and prohibiting intentional starvation, regardless of the conflict's legitimacy.

The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) applies to the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), requiring Israel, as the occupying power, to protect civilians. It mandates humane treatment, prohibits collective punishment, targeting of civilians, and forced displacement. Specifically protects civilians in war and occupied territories. Both Israel and Palestine are party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Expansion of settlements in the West Bank is considered illegal under international humanitarian law. Article 49 prohibits the deportation or transfer of parts of the occupying power's own population into occupied territory. Protection of Rights: The occupying power must ensure food and medical supplies for the population. Safety of Palestinians must be guaranteed, including protecting them from settler violence.

Self-Defense Context: Following the October 7, 2023 attack, Israel invoked its right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. This self-defense right, however, must comply with necessity and proportionality in its overall military response, as well as with IHL. Illegal Occupation Claims: suggest that because the occupation of Palestinian territories is considered illegal by international courts, Israel's claims of self-defense does not have the same rights to "self-defense" against the occupied territory. The US-Israeli military actions against Iran (beginning March 2026) have been decided by ICJ, it is considered a violation of international law. International legal experts, agrees that the US Israel's actions, lack UN Security Council authorization and do not meet the strict necessity test for self-defense, potentially constituting acts of aggression. While some argue these actions are justified as pre-emptive self-defense against an ongoing threat, many international scholars and UN experts argue that these strikes violate the UN Charter. The world faces record levels of conflict and violence with a significant impact on people. These are the armed conflicts or real wars that were never officially declared, can be seen here;

1. The Quasi-War between US – France (1798-1800)
2. Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871)
3. Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945)
4. The Soviet-Finnish Winter War (1939-1940)
5. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)
6. Korean War (1950-1953)
7. Vietnam War (1955-1975)
8. The Six-Day War Israel against Egypt (1967)
9. Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan (1979-1989)
10. The Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)
11. The Falklands War (1982)
12. The Kosovo War (1998-1999)
13. U.S. Invasion of Panama (1989)
14. The Crimean Peninsula Annexation (2014)
15. The War in Donbass Russia – Ukraine (2014-present)
16. In 2023 alone, over 170-armed conflicts were recorded. By the 2024 end of the year, nearly 120 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, and events seriously disturbing public order.
17. USA – Israel – Iran - invasion over Palestine. April 2026, the actions of the United States and Israel specifically joint military operations against Iran starting February 28, 2026, and ongoing actions in Gaza and

Lebanon have created a volatile international landscape that many experts argue is eroding the post-1945 international order.

I. Role Of International Law in Protecting Its Subjects in Armed Conflicts

There are certain direct and clear obligations under international law, which has been said above and, in this part, considering the **other legal provisions exist** that indirectly protect the environment through their implementation. Environmental protection in armed conflict is primarily accomplished through implementing relevant provisions of existing international humanitarian law. Additionally, other applicable bodies of international law can provide clarification on how such protection may best be achieved. However, beyond formal legal obligations, in general, States have increasingly demonstrated greater political interest in protecting the environment in armed conflict, reflecting a growing concern for environmental protection in armed conflict.

- **International Law** consider these 3 as its main subjects; the independent States' territory, the populations and it registered international organization. Protecting these subjects against armed conflict, destruction of its environment and disrupting peace and harmony, is the vital obligation of States. **An armed conflict** is said to exist when there is an armed confrontation between the. armed forces of States (international armed conflict), or between governmental authorities and organized armed groups or between such groups within a State (non-international armed conflict). ICRC consider the term as a a de facto state of hostilities dependent on neither a declaration nor recognition of the existence of "war" by its parties.
- **International Humanitarian Law.**
 - IHL is the main body of law applicable to military operations in situations of armed conflict. It provides both direct and indirect protections for the environment.
 - Direct IHL protections on the natural environment are often seen as too stringent to be effective, due to the very high threshold of harm.
 - Indirect protections are therefore seen as offering most protection. For instance, consider the principle of the protection of civilian objects which mandates that parties to the conflict must always distinguish between civilian objectives and military objectives, thereby indirectly protecting the environmental resources that constitute civilian objects
- **International Environmental Law**
 - International environmental law ("IEL") is a body of law that has developed significantly since the 1960s. It consists of treaty and customary obligations related to environmental protection and the responsibility of States with regard to environmental harm.
 - IEL provides more specific and technical obligations than other bodies of international law and may provide more clear and concrete measures for protection of the environment. Developments under IEL in the form of statutes, or judgments and interpretations by international treaty-monitoring bodies, can also contribute to the understanding of obligations under other bodies of law such as IHL, by expanding the application of existing customary law norms that concern the environment.
 - IEL was traditionally envisaged for application primarily during peace-time. The extension of IEL to situations of armed conflict is context-specific, and depends on the content of the treaty, nature of the armed conflict, and type of military operation.
- **International Human Rights Law**
 - International human rights law (IHRL) continues to apply in situations of armed conflict and contains certain provisions that directly or indirectly address the protection of the environment in relation to individuals affected by environmental harm.

- It addresses, for instance, the right to a clean, healthy, civiliansinconflict.org sustainable and safe environment, and also expressly recognizes the link between harm to the environment and the right to life, family life, and health, along with the rights of minority groups and indigenous peoples to their culture and traditional practices.
- The application of IHRL in armed conflict may be dependent on the context, and needs to be determined on a case-by-cases basis.
- IHRL stipulates specific protections linking the environment to individual human rights, and can additionally provide guidance around State-conduct affecting natural resources and the environment during armed conflict. It can also help inform existing provisions under other bodies of law— such as on the question of how the state of the environment affects the survival of the civilian population.
- Further, the expertise of monitoring and enforcement bodies enriches contemporary understanding of how IHRL is linked to the protection of the environment

● International Criminal Law

- Finally, international criminal law encompasses provisions that may directly or indirectly protect the environment in armed conflict. However, the codification of international crimes related to the environment is currently underway. A certain type of environmental harm can either constitute an international crime in itself, or additionally also represent a material element of another international crime, such as a war crime. For instance, consider attacks on forests as part of a scorched earth tactic – such attacks could constitute the war crime of destruction of property.
- The war crime of excessive incidental death, injury, or damage – as codified under the Rome Statute and the supplementary Elements of Crime – accounts for excessive, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment. Yet, this definition is restricted in scope. In order to count as a war crime, environmental damage must meet the high threshold of harm envisioned under IHL and must be clearly disproportionate and excessive.
- At the same time, the Rome Statute provides other avenues for addressing harm to the natural environment as a material element of other war crimes.
- In 2021, an Independent Expert Panel comprising senior jurists, academics and members of civil society, launched a definition of the crime of ecocide and suggested that it be included as an additional separate crime under the Rome Statute.
- Efforts to codify the international crime of genocide are still at an elementary stage, and the aforementioned definition, while aspirational, has no legally binding effect. To date, environmental war crimes have not been adjudicated before an international court, but the increasing momentum for the international criminalization of harm to the environment in conflict demonstrates its heightened significance for the international community.
- This law has proven worthy in prosecuting war crimes and war criminal since the Tribunal of Nuremberg, Tribunal of Tokyo and in Tribunal of Yugoslavia.

II. The Impacts of Armed Conflicts on the Worlds' Environment

1. Impact On Natural Resources.

Warfare disrupts the delicate balance of nature in many ways. Environmental damage brings devastating consequences for natural resources, critical ecosystems, and people's health, livelihoods, and security. When forests are cleared for military purposes, fertile lands and vital water resources can become contaminated. Militaries often clear vegetation or otherwise disrupt ecosystems to remove cover for enemy combatants. Make

areas uninhabitable and force local populations to leave, with major impacts on nature. Local communities reported the use of such tactics during Sudan's civil war and in Iraq, where wetlands were drained.

In Ukraine, large swathes of land are at risk of contamination with landmines and unexploded ordnance. Its soil, waterways, and forests have been polluted by shelling, fires, and floods. Clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance often takes decades and requires significant investment. In Ukraine, costs are expected to be around US\$34.6 billion. In Gaza, complete degradation of the soil, water, land, and agriculture. Sewage, wastewater, and solid waste management systems and facilities have collapsed. The destruction of buildings, roads, and other infrastructure has generated millions of tons of debris, some of which is contaminated with unexploded ordnance, asbestos, and other hazardous substances. The increasing rates of communicable diseases in Gaza.

The World Health Organization reported 179,000 cases of acute respiratory infection and 136,400 cases of diarrhea among children under five—a clear indication of the impact of the destruction of public works. The abundance of natural resources has fueled armed conflict. Democratic Republic of Congo - Unsustainable mining, logging, and poaching practices both perpetuate violence and devastate the environment in countries like the, where mining cobalt and coltan for rechargeable batteries continues to fuel the conflict in the east.

2. Causing Emissions and Pollution.

Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory, militaries account for an estimated 5.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. The heavy energy use resulting from conflicts exacerbates the climate crisis, both through direct greenhouse gas emissions from military activities and indirect effects at the global level.

So far there are these 2 conventions, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement safeguarding against the emissions and pollution but in this era of conflict most states members have refrain from the conventions and in fact USA have suspended its cooperations. When USA pull out of the 2 convention their supports also did the same, the impact is that a big bulk of their contribution in form of financial support and expertise are also back out. That left UN a big hole in their operation.

Damage to chemical industrial sites causes fires and releases pollutants into the air, water, and soil, creating significant immediate and longer-term human health and ecological hazards through contamination. Armed conflicts use large quantities of munitions containing heavy metals and depleted uranium, and explosive chemicals, all toxic even in modest quantities, with devastating impacts on human health and the environment.

From contaminated lands and polluted waterways to the release of toxic substances and greenhouse gases, the environmental toll of war is immense and far-reaching. Recognizing this impact is the first step towards mitigating harm, promoting environmental remediation, and ultimately, preventing future conflicts.

An example can be seen in Gulf War in 1991, hundreds of oil well fires burned uncontrollably in Kuwait and affected air quality on a global scale. More than 600 oil wells were reportedly destroyed or set on fire, resulting in the daily release of up to 500,000 metric tons of pollutants that affected the air quality of surrounding states. Another example involves the 34day war between Israel and Lebanon in 2006, the bombing of the Jiyeh power plant in Lebanon resulted in the release of 10,000 to 15,000 tons of oil into the Mediterranean Sea, affecting most of the Lebanese coastline and partly extending into Syria. The spill resulted in the deaths of seabirds and marine life.

3. The Impact of Environmental Harm on The Protection of Civilians

- i. Damage to certain targets such as dams may cause significant environmental and civilian harm. Less directly, and over the longer term, harm to the environment can affect a population's ability to live off their land, and can impact their health through pollution, or explosive or toxic remnants of war. Certain actions taken by parties to the conflict that affect the environment, such as pollution or manipulation of river routes, may affect civilians' ability to access water for drinking or agricultural use.

- ii. It is worth noting that such harm undermines the protection of the entire global population and is also increasingly recognized as a security threat, often aggravating conflict and undermining stability. Conflict-affected populations are especially vulnerable to the consequences of climate change
- iii. The mitigation of factors that contribute to climate change, such as environmental harm, is therefore a long-term contribution to the protection of civilians. different segments of the civilian population experience varied vulnerabilities in the face of environmental harm, and these disparities must be borne in mind when State or non-State actors seek to effectively reduce potential harm.
- iv. The environmental harm caused by States during armed conflict may not necessarily be intentional. But in order to effectively minimize such harm, States need to take environmental impact into account when planning and carrying out military operations.
- v. State has this duty towards its subjects: (Jus Bello).

The obligations of precaution and prevention under both international humanitarian law (IHL) and international environmental law (IEL) may have particular relevance for environmental protection in military operations. They also have an obligation to ensure constant care in the conduct of all military operations, to spare civilians and civilian objects.

Generally, to exercise due regard for the environmental impact of military operations. The precautionary principle under IEL further suggests that decision-makers should “err on the side of caution” with regard to lack of scientific certainty or knowledge regarding possible environmental harm. The designation of areas of major environmental and cultural importance as protected zones, ideally prior to armed conflict, is one way of implementing precautionary measures.

vi. Choice of Weapon in Armed Conflict (Jus Ballum)

Certain types of weapons, by their nature or use, may be expected to cause harm to the environment. These may either be prohibited completely, or warring parties may be required to take their effects into account when choosing means of warfare. Environmental protection is strengthened by the ratification and implementation of relevant treaties. Chemical and biological weapons are completely banned as a means of warfare, irrespective of their impact on the environment. Nuclear weapons can have devastating effects on the environment, in both their testing and use, as well as potentially constituting toxic remnants of war.

There are specific environmental consequences related to the impact of remnants of war, some of which are regulated by treaties. Explosive remnants of war can affect the environment through their detonation or degradation over time. Toxic remnants of war are those that represent a hazard to humans or ecosystems through the radiological or toxic substances resulting from military activities, ranging from weapons testing and combat to military waste disposal.

4. Impact Of Armed Conflict to Direct and indirect Impact on Environment.

a. Direct Environmental Damage

Weapon Residues: The use of explosives and munitions releases heavy metals and hazardous chemicals (e.g., depleted uranium) into the soil, air, and water. Armed conflicts causing an Infrastructure Destruction. Such as Targeting industrial sites, oil depots, and chemical plants leads to massive, immediate chemical contamination. The armed conflict damaged Ecosystems This happen when Military operations often result in the clearing of vegetation, destruction of habitats, and damage to protected areas. It also causing Water Contamination especially when the bombing of infrastructure can cause water sources to be polluted with sewage, industrial chemicals, and debris. As reported by new, the armed conflict did specifically aim at destroy source of drinking and clean water.

b. Indirect Environmental Consequences

Causing Resource Depletion. Insecurity and loss of infrastructure cause local populations to overexploit natural resources for survival, such as deforestation for fuel. It weakened Governance when the conflict often stops environmental protection programs, enabling illegal logging, poaching, and unregulated mining to thrive. There will be a Displacement Impact where large-scale population displacement creates intense pressure on local ecosystems and resources, causing rapid degradation in refugee areas. Of course there will be a Hazardous Debris from massive amounts of building rubble and the worst is when these rubbles are contaminated with materials like asbestos.

c. Long-Term And Regional Impacts

: Pollutants from conflict, such as toxic chemical residues, persist in the environment, causing long-term damage to ecosystems and agricultural lands. This is a Delayed Toxicity impact on environment. War increases emissions through military logistics, fuel use, and massive fires, while reducing the ability of countries to combat climate change. This is a Climate Change Amplification that led to "Scorched Earth" Tactics, A deliberate destruction, such as burning oil wells or flooding areas, causes widespread, long-lasting damage.

A STATE MAY PROTECT ITS SUBJECTS

Therefore, what can a States or any States act in situation of armed conflict. An interesting recommendation we introduced by UNDEP recently.

A. Recommendations by UNDEP include this action:

- i. States should recognize the interrelatedness of military operations and environmental harm, and their mutual impact on civilian populations. When assessing civilian harm from past operations and when planning new military tactics, States should look at direct and indirect or reverberating effects of their operations on the environment. When using dedicated civilian harm tracking mechanisms, States should include these direct and indirect effects in the scope of their analyses.
- ii. States should ratify relevant treaties related to the protection of the environment in armed conflict and comply with their international legal obligations. States may choose to engage in pledges committing to greater protection of the environment in the preparation and conduct of their military operations.
- iii. Integrating environmental considerations within military planning is imperative for mitigating environmental harm during military operations. Militaries should incorporate relevant guidance, such as the updated ICRC guidelines, in military manuals and training.
- iv. States planning military operations need to include environmental assessments in their initial legal analyses and develop tools to monitor the environmental impact of their military operations. Environmental assessments are necessary in order to determine compliance with international law on targeting, but are also useful for States seeking to mitigate the environmental harm of their military operations more generally. Those planning military operations must take all feasible precautions during an attack to avoid or, at the very least, to minimize incidental damage to the environment. They must also take precautionary measures against the effects of an attack. Such precautions include refraining from conducting operations within, or in close proximity to, valuable or especially sensitive ecosystems that may be particularly vulnerable to the impact of military operations.
- v. As a policy matter, States should err on the side of caution with regard to lack of scientific certainty about possible environmental harm. States should seek to designate—ideally in times of peace—areas of major environmental and cultural importance as protected zones. During armed conflict, the use of demilitarized zones established by agreement between parties as provided for under IHL may enhance the protection of such areas. Potential harm to the environment needs to be taken into account when deciding on targets, including during proportionality assessments. Those planning military operations should recognize that the

destruction of certain types of targets, or targets in particular locations, may have exacerbated impacts on the environment.

- vi. States must not launch attacks that are expected to cause long-term, widespread, and severe damage to the environment. States should coordinate with other relevant actors to effectively prevent and address environmental harm in armed conflict, such as working with other States, international organizations, the scientific community, and environmental experts, as well as with civil society and local populations.
- vii. When choosing and deciding how to use weapons, States should pay attention to environmental impacts. In the development or acquisition of new weapons, they should be conscious of the potential environmental impact of their use. States and their militaries should take into account the environmental consequences of explosive and toxic remnants of war—including the acquisition or development of such weapons, their storage and use, and the environmental consequences of clearance operations.
- viii. States should ratify relevant treaties and cooperate with international and civil society organizations working on remnants of war. States should exercise due diligence regarding the use and exploitation of conflict resources, including by third parties.

State must plan carefully and consider this recommendation before and after any act involve on any type of Armed Conflict.

B. Cooperation And Distribution of Responsibilities in Protecting the Environment

The most effective protection of the environment during armed conflict is through cooperation and distribution of responsibilities across multiple relevant actors.

- i. **Addressing such impact requires multi-State approaches to cooperation**, an established principle under IEL.

States can share good practice on effective domestic implementation measures for environmental protection. Cooperation between States can potentially provide more efficient environmental protection in armed conflict, through sharing of knowledge, resources, and expertise. NATO supports partner countries in cleaning up dangerous stockpiles of weapons, unexploded remnants of war and ammunition.

- ii. **Sharing Scientific and environmental experts.**

States therefore need to work with the scientific community to understand the potential impact of military operations on the environment. This group can include international organizations, NGOs with knowledge of environmental matters, as well as existing domestic governmental actors and national environmental regulation organizations

- iii. **Civil society and local populations.**

Communication with local populations can also offer insights into the environmental impact of military operations and appropriate remedies. Local populations, including indigenous peoples who are often most affected by environmental harm, can play a key role in safeguarding the environment that they depend on for their sustenance and livelihood. Civil society can also play a vital role in supporting and strengthening the implementation of environmental protection norms in armed conflict

- iv. **Non-State Actors.**

Non-State actors such as corporations and non-state armed groups have an important role to play in protecting the environment during armed conflict. While non-State actors may have direct obligations under international and domestic law, States must continue to exercise due diligence to ensure that these obligations are upheld. In particular, the exploitation of natural resources to fund war efforts can have severe adverse consequences, including the depletion of such resources. Conflict can also create situations prone to looting, pillage and illegal

trade of environmental resources. Non-State actors and non-State armed groups play a much broader role in the exploitation or protection of the environment in conflict zones.

CONCLUSION

Overview of the relationship between the role of international law, (the main actor UN Organization) conduct of State and military operations, shows the impact on environmental causing destruction and harm, and the potential protection of civilian's expectation during and after armed conflict. It is important to review the Legal State Responsibility. Where Parties to a Conflict are obliged to allow humanitarian aid and protect infrastructure; failure to do so, causing widespread, long-term, and severe damage to civilians, constitutes a war crime. Example - War Crimes - Regarding Water Supply Prohibition of Weaponizing Water. Cutting off water supply during war constitutes a severe breach of international humanitarian law (IHL) and a potential war crime. "What states choose to do now will determine whether our world succumbs to war or reclaim its protection of humanity". International law considers the situation now that the Earth is now on "war without law". ICRC President, Mirjana Spoljaric, war without limits equals suffering without end. Continuous destruction of environment and civilization is not justifies on armed conflict that is illegal to begin with. The present armed conflict is the worst war, Earth seen since World War 1 and World War 11.

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