Environmental sustainability syria

Environmental sustainability syria

The Environmental Protection Agency of Syria (EPA-Syria) is a non-governmental, non-political, and non-profit organization dedicated to promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Our approach is evidence-based, leveraging the expertise of professionals and volunteers to foster a more sustainable future.EPA will provide its ser.... Learn More

Yet one clear threat to human security is often ignored when assessing the human toll of armed conflict: the deterioration of natural resources and, more broadly, the cost of environmental degradation. This report identifies the set of challenges to environmental and human security that an almost decade-long conflict has exacted on Syria, and asks how they have affected populations, and what challenges lie ahead for lasting recovery.

There is an ongoing debate in policy and academia on the meaning of the environment for security concerns. Understanding these debates can offer conceptual tools for policymakers to craft sustainable reconstruction efforts in Syria. This report outlines the development of environmental security as a concept, and then uses the framework to analyze the Syrian conflict, before offering several brief proposals on how it can be applied by interested parties.

At the end of the Cold War, nontraditional security studies started to broaden agendas beyond military and economic threats to include energy-related and environmental concerns. Scholars originally defined environmental security in exclusively realist terms, focusing on threats to the state and invoking narratives about wars and insurrections that could arise from conflict over diminishing resources.5

In turn, scholarly work on environmental security flourished within two categories. First, such work explored narratives that questioned how environmental change related to violent conflict and the integrity of the state.6 Second, it examined the broader implications of environmental issues, in which the concept of security refers to other entities besides the state. The concept of security gradually moved away from states and toward networks of individuals and nonstate actors.

Similarly, some scholars argued in favor of a kind of security that went even further--one that considered questions of human security and environmental well-being.7 This turn was a key inflection point informing different views of environmental and climate security: some saw the environment as a trigger of conflict and insecurity, while others saw the environment as the object of security itself.

In this new security framework, the environment is not a freely existing trove of natural resources to be fought over and monetized, but rather encompasses the physical factors that condition human affairs and well-being.

The inclusion of environmental concerns in security discourses doesn"t just force academics, analysts, and

practitioners to broaden the consideration of potential threats. Significantly, it also requires them to consider who or what is being threatened. A human-centered perspective is, therefore, helpful for sustainable postconflict recovery.

The war intensified such disparities and patterns of human insecurity. It also paved the way for lucrative war economies, in which pro- and anti-regime elites carried out smuggling and extortion rackets in exchange for the supply of food, water, and fuel to local populations.

In the past few months, Syria and its 1 million internally displaced people, like many conflict-stricken and impoverished countries in the Global South, confronted another major threat: the extremely rapid spread of COVID-19. The amplified risk of the pandemic in Syria is part of a deadly feedback loop of mounting pressures on livelihoods, with lockdown restrictions increasing poverty and unemployment.16 The disease has quickly spread through the country and refugee camps, and its incidence is widely considered to be underreported.

While these examples illustrate the tragic legacy of the war on the livelihoods and resources of Syrians, they must also be examined in the context of environmental threats. The conflict decimated and displaced large swaths of the population; it also created serious environmental and health impacts for the survivors, some visible and others less apparent.

Between 2012 and 2017, both state and nonstate actors, such as the Islamic State, weaponized Syria"s major oil pipelines and main hydroelectric dams, including the Tabqa and Tishrin Dams on the Euphrates River.17 Today, Islamic State remnants continue to target oil fields in the desert of Homs governorate.18 External powers have also extended their grip over Syrian oil fields in the central, eastern, and northeastern regions (Russia and the United States being active in the latter two regions, respectively). Meanwhile, Iran has resumed its oil exports to Syria.19