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CONTEXT

The world is facing increasing record levels of conflict and violence with significant impact on people. In addition to the unacceptable human cost of war and the destruction of man-made works, there is profound environmental damage, immense and often neglected.

Conflicts disrupt ecosystems, deplete natural resources, pollute the environment, and jeopardize the health of our planet for generations to come.



THE ROLE OF SCIENCE

War always causes serious damage to the environment and the cultural wealth of peoples, and the risks become enormous when one thinks of nuclear and biological weapons [3]. The role of science, especially geosciences, in peacebuilding is increasingly urgent. Peace sciences represent a body of knowledge that is fundamental for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, as envisaged by the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is imperative to translate the goals of this agenda into concrete actions, hoping for science not only as an observer, but as a catalyst for change.

UNITED NATIONS - SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



GET INVOLVED SCAN QR



CASE STUDY

The escalation of conflict since October 7th 2023 has clearly had a profound impact on people and the environment in Gaza. Intensive bombardment by Israel has led to unprecedented intensity of destruction in terms of infrastructure, productive assets and service delivery. Sewage, wastewater and solid waste management systems and facilities have collapsed. The destruction of buildings, roads and other infrastructure has generated over 39 million tons of debris, some of which is contaminated with unexploded ordnance, asbestos and other hazardous substances [1].

Similarly, in the conflict that began on 24 February 2022, Ukraine has experienced considerable environmental destruction. Preliminary monitoring of environmental impacts since the outset of the invasion by the Russian Federation points to substantial damage to urban and rural environments across a wide geographic area. Numerous incidents have caused pollution to air, water and land and degraded nature. Environmental damage carries risks both to Ukraine and neighbouring countries [2].

CALL TO ACTION

Geoscience is not only about understanding the Earth, but also about creating a future of peace and peacebuilding:

- promoting a united and democratic Europe that supports peace, cooperation and sustainability;
- strengthen scientific collaboration to protect shared natural resource and policies that integrate environmental protection into peacebuilding;
- share peacebuilding information among European professionals: a pillars of the ESCO (European Skills/Competences, Qualifications and Occupations).

REFERENCES

[1] UN Environment Programme 2024 *Environmental impact of conflict in Gaza Preliminary assessment of environmental impacts*. Nairobi. wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/45739. [2] UN Environment Programme 2022 *The Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Ukraine: A Preliminary Review*. Nairobi Kenya Volume 3 pp. 154–196. [3] *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis 24.05.2015.

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