

Uticaj rata u Gazi na bezbednost životne sredine

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Apstrakt: Ovaj rad ispituje efekte rata u Gazi na bezbednost životne sredine, sa naglaskom na lokalna i globalna pitanja. Ovaj rad pronalazi značajne posledice na nekoliko nivoa, ispitujući kako su se nacionalne politike bezbednosti životne sredine ukrštale sa ratom u Gazi i njegovim implikacijama na proces klimatskih promena UN. Ističe se uloga vojnih operacija i njihove posledice, naglašavajući širi uticaj sukoba na bezbednost životne sredine. Pored toga, rad pojašnjava diplomatske izazove koji proističu iz ovih tenzija, posebno kada je u pitanju međunarodna saradnja u oblasti bezbednosti životne sredine. Može se zaključiti da rezultati naglašavaju kako je rat u Gazi uticao na bezbednost životne sredine na različite načine i ima šire posledice po međunarodne odnose.

Keywords: Rat u Gazi, bezbednost životne sredine, klimatske promene

The Impact of Gaza War on Environmental Security

Abstract: This study examines the effects of the Gaza War on environmental security, with an emphasis on both domestic and global issues. The paper finds significant consequences at several levels by examining how national environmental security policies intersected with the Gaza War and its implications for the UN climate change process. It emphasizes the role of military operations and their consequences, underscoring the wider influence of conflicts on environmental security. Additionally, the study clarifies the diplomatic challenges that result from these tensions, especially when it comes to international collaboration on environmental security. Overall, the results highlight how the Gaza War has affected environmental security in a variety of ways and has wider ramifications for international relations.

Keywords: Gaza war, environmental security, climate change

1. Introduction

Environmental security is considered one of the critical issues that has been addressed for decades and which global societies face, the importance of environmental security is increasing day by day as a result of developments and renewable industries in our world, in addition to the human relationship with the environment. The term environmental security became widely used in 1977 following the publication of a paper by the American political environmental analyst Lester Brown under the subject of "Redefining Security", where Brown argued that it was time to abandon the conventional understanding of national security as a major threat caused by other nations. He underlined that rather than focusing on nations as the main security threat, future security seems to be more dependent on the human relationship with nature (Dodds, 2017).

Climate change, resources-related conflicts, degraded water and air quality, as well as land and other threats to sustainability, the economy, public health, livelihoods, and overall peace and stability, are all included in the broad category of environmental security challenges. Therefore, in order to overcome obstacles and achieve environmental security, states and international organizations must work together and develop long-term practical strategies (Katsos, 2018).

Nowadays, international security may witness the effects of warfare on the environment because of the ongoing wars and conflicts, particularly in the Middle East. Since the effects of conflict on the environment include things like the use of chemical weapons, an increase in the number of displaced people, etc. that undoubtedly have an impact on air quality, climate change, national security and more

regarded as a common security concern. Regardless, the effects of conflicts and wars on environmental security start long before they happen because armies are implicated in the increased energy consumption associated with operating ships, aircraft, and other training apparatuses as well as the development of military forces and training programs meant to maintain military readiness. Studies indicate that up about 5.5% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide is caused by militaries. Moreover, the aforementioned, armies may need a lot of land, which deteriorates the land and reduces biodiversity. However, these are just a few instances that demonstrate how much conflicts affect environmental security (Weir, 2020).

The Gaza war is considered one of the most exciting recent issues in light of global security developments. On October 7, 2023, Hamas and other armed groups launched rocket attacks against Israel, causing injury to both Israeli soldiers and civilians. They also crossed the Gaza border fence and entered Israeli territory. As a result, things moved quickly, and the Israeli army started bombarding Gaza at a level never seen before, prompting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to declare war. From this point on, the Israeli-Gaza conflict grew more intense (Diakonia, 2023). But how might this conflict impact environmental security locally and worldwide?

This study investigates, as a case study, how the most recent conflict in Gaza has affected environmental security from a variety of sectors with local expertise in infrastructure security, lowering global warming, and the security of water, food, air, and land. In addition to the extent of the war's impact on international cooperation, and more specifically how the war affected the United Nations' recent efforts for the COP 28 summit. The study also offers suggestions for practical tactics that should be used to lessen the effects of conflicts involving environmental security.

2. National environmental security and the Gaza War

While the mechanisms of conflict have the ability to quickly destroy environmental peace and security, similar to other wars, the Gaza War requires the use of increasing amounts of fossil fuels, which raises carbon emissions.

During the war, Israel used chemical weapons on Gaza. The use of chemical weapons and dangerous substances, like white phosphorus, can have a direct and deadly effect on human life, as is the case in Gaza. This is because the substance sticks to clothing and skin when exposed to oxygen, causing burns that can penetrate bones, and the smoke that results can harm respiratory systems and eyes. White phosphorus has a detrimental direct impact on orchards and agricultural areas, as well as a direct and indirect horrible effect on animals, livestock, and water bodies in terms of environmental diversity. Although the environmental effects of white phosphorus use may not be as obvious, their long-term damage makes them just as dangerous as the fatal effects. The poisoning of the soil is caused by extended exposure to it. The urban areas in Iraq, Yemen, and Lebanon that were previously subjected to phosphorous weapons may provide the best illustration of this, as research has shown that these areas' environments suffered significant harm as well as an increase in air pollution (Editorial, 2023).

In terms of water security, due to a lack of readily available sources of potable water, Gaza has consistently and obviously suffered from problems related to water security. 96 percent of the water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption, according to UNICEF reports from 2019, and given the ongoing conflict, the blockade placed on Gaza is even more problematic. The development of water and sanitation infrastructure suffers greatly when aid is prevented from entering. As a result, the population is unable to access basic necessities. It's also crucial to note that Israel's decision to cut off Gaza's residents' access to electricity means that the desalination plants stop operating, depriving the population of a source of drinkable water, leaving them with no choice but to use tap water tainted with sewage and seawater. On October 17, UNRWA emphasized that the shortage of clean water due to the conflict was a serious threat to Gaza's citizens. It also expressed concern about the spread of diseases that are transmitted through water and the possibility of drought. Combine that with the effects of contaminated water sources and potentially dangerously decreasing corpses. Diseases spread as a result, and the cholera outbreak—which could arise from rainwater combining with sewage that has flooded Gaza's streets as a result of sewage facilities' harming infrastructure—may be the most alarming development (The New Arab, 2023).

Given that Gaza has been under siege for almost 16 years, it is known that supplies like fuel and electricity are not always available. As a result, 60% of Gaza's population lives entirely off solar power, which is advantageous for sustainability and environmental security. Additionally, clean energy is really important in terms of environmental security, but the fighting has recently resulted in the destruction of

thousands of structures that house solar panels, which makes efforts to combat climate change more difficult (News and Press Release, 2023).

However, a news agency told Sky News Arabia that Israel might carry out its plan, which calls for filling the underground tunnels used by the Hamas movement with seawater and using it as a weapon to further its military goals (Jeff Goodson, 2023). That's right !Israel started carrying out the plan a few days after the news broke. However, studies show that the seepage of salty sea water into groundwater has a negative impact on the availability and quality of fresh water, which means more water security issues for Gaza and also causes pressure. As a result, such a step may lead to numerous devastating effects on environmental security, such as environmental pollution. In addition to its potential long-term effects on agricultural wealth and coastal groundwater, this plan may also result in soil poisoning and buildings demolition caused by weak infrastructure and soil (News Media Contact, 2016).

3. Gaza War and UN Climate Change Process

People who experience war and conflict frequently find themselves in the midst of a climate crisis; this is the case in nations like Sudan, Yemen, and Afghanistan that have experienced war in the past. Gaza is anticipated to play a role in the climate crisis as well. It is important to remember that conflicts and climate change are related because they both limit Conflicts have an impact on a nation's capacity to handle the consequences of climate damage they cause. On the other hand, resource-related conflicts are an inevitable consequence of the climate crisis getting worse. As such, it is anticipated that Gaza will become included in the climate emergency shortly (BULLENS, 2023). Regardless, non-governmental organizations are crucial in helping civilians survive by giving them access to necessities like food, clothing, shelter, and other support that lessens the difficulties brought on by conflict. Upholding security and peace is one of the main objectives of the United Nations, one of the most well-known non-governmental organizations in the world. The United Nations puts a lot of effort into protecting the environment and reducing environmental degradation and climate change by implementing practical long-term strategies.

The UN's attempts to bring about a localized peace have been impeded by the Gaza War. Numerous UN offices in Gaza have suffered significant damage as a result of Israeli airstrikes due to the escalation of violence and conflict. The effects on security of the Gaza War are all listed above. The United Nations' efforts are threatened by the environmental threat. The impact of the war extended beyond national efforts to include international ones. The Middle East's climate agenda is at odds with Gaza's wartime situation, since the region is already experiencing drought due to climate change, threats resulting from the phenomenon of global warming are already being felt there. The region appears to be already vulnerable in terms of agriculture and resource competition, and it appears that the war's environmental effects will exacerbate and complicate matters. Global threats arising from the Gaza conflict are generally indirect. For instance, as oil prices rise, there is a direct correlation between wars and oil. In the midst of the wars, and particularly in the Gaza war, the price of oil surged to about \$92 per barrel. It is anticipated that as long as the conflict lasts, oil prices will rise. The intensification of oil extraction will unavoidably result from rising oil prices because of resource competition. In addition to creating geopolitical tensions over resource-rich regions, rising oil prices could have detrimental long-term effects on the environment. We also add that major conflicts like the Gaza war have caused economic efforts related to climate recovery to be delayed, despite the gravity and urgency of the situation regarding the impacts of global warming (Elgendy, 2023).

The conflict in Gaza will unavoidably impede climate efforts and initiatives to conserve water, develop renewable energy, and other related projects, as incitement to the war. Given the developments in the war, the war hinders diplomatic efforts related to climate change, as climate cooperation between Arab countries and Israel has increased recently. The Palestinian problem will bring attention to the anti-Israel sentiment among Arabs.

It was anticipated that close to a thousand Israeli delegations, including the Israeli Prime Minister and numerous other Israeli government officials, would attend the United Nations COP28 Conference of the Parties in Dubai, where Israel intended to use the event as a platform to highlight diplomatic relations between Arab and Israeli. Though it was anticipated that close to a thousand Israeli delegations, including the Israeli Prime Minister and numerous other Israeli government officials, would attend, the conference was impacted by the escalation in Gaza. Even though many of the participants felt that they should abstain in some way, they did not show up, and the delegation's size was lowered. In terms of politics at UN

climate conferences, the war in Gaza has already had an impact. Several presidents, including Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and others, have used the platform to criticize and accuse Israel of bombing Gaza, discuss war crimes, and try to bring attention to the war rather than the specific topic of climate security (AL JAZEERA AND NEWS AGENCIES, 2023).

4. Recommendation

The war on Gaza will unavoidably result in significant environmental damage over the short and long terms, even though it is challenging to gather data or measurements regarding the extent of environmental damage caused by the conflict and the course of events. In any event, environmental justice will also be necessary to bring about peace in the region. In order to comprehend the harm caused by the war and the latest developments in the Gaza conflict with respect to environmental health, the relevant authorities need to pursue their ongoing environmental assessment. Adopting both short- and long-term plans based on the published environmental assessments must be done with readiness, while it might be challenging to begin addressing the environmental harm caused by the war while it is still going on, continuously evaluating the harm aids in planning and preparing for the adoption of immediate treatment strategies to limit pollution and safeguard essential services and environmental systems, which can then be put into action whenever the chance presents itself. It is important to remember that recovery programs, when it comes to immediate treatment plans for environmentally damaged areas, long-term care is crucial.

In order to address environmental challenges and coordinate among stakeholders to arrive at the most effective environmental response, it would be beneficial for various local sectors and organizations to work together. In order to restore Gaza's healthy ecosystem, international cooperation is also essential. The environment in Palestine must be protected by international powers, who should also take into consideration that the ongoing threat to environmental security posed by the war will not only affect the region directly but may also spread to neighboring countries, resulting in new environmental disasters (SHUKER, 2023).

In any case, since the conflict is still going on, it is thought that increasing environmental aid from abroad could have a major positive impact on Gaza's environmental security at the moment, particularly given that the region now primarily depends on aid from abroad to meet its basic needs. In addition to managing the environment in refugee camps and supplying clean water and wholesome food, international aid must also alleviate conflict-related pollution by removing hazardous materials that harm the environment and raising public awareness in order to empower people to adopt sustainable practices, lessen their impact on the environment, and fight diseases that spread. Coordination with local environmental agencies and organizations is thought to be the best way to guarantee the efforts made to protect the environment, as a result of the degradation of sanitation, the scarcity of clean water, and other environmental damage.

5. Conclusion

In light of recent developments in global security, the Gaza War is regarded as one of the most exciting issues. The military's use of fossil fuels to power its vehicles increased during the Gaza War. White phosphorus and other chemical weapons that have long-term negative effects on the environment were also used during the conflict (Weir, 2020). The conflict has had a negative impact on UN efforts to protect the environment both locally and indirectly globally. The siege imposed on Gaza caused the sanitation infrastructure to deteriorate because it prevented the entry of international aid and cut off electrical supplies, leaving the population without access to basic necessities (BULLENS, 2023).

Even though it is challenging to quantify the amount of environmental harm that has been done to Gaza as a result of the ongoing war or conflict, the threat this conflict poses to environmental security will not only affect the area directly but also neighboring areas. For instance, in addition to the disruption of power supplies, as we previously stated, Gaza's sanitation infrastructure is already deteriorating. Consequently, there are risks when sewage is dumped into the Mediterranean Sea, a severe risk to the area. We also mentioned that a lot of energy supplies, such as fuel and other supplies, are needed for conflicts and wars in order to outfit and run war machines, but in order to produce building supplies and engage in processes like the manufacturing of cement and concrete, rebuilding Gaza will also need a lot of energy. This will result in increased carbon dioxide emissions, which will further exacerbate the complexity of the climate catastrophe.

The war's persistence and intensification in Gaza could cause it to spread to nearby nations and other arenas, making peace or an agreement more difficult to achieve. This would have a direct impact on environmental security and raise the possibility that World War III could break out as a result of geopolitical conflicts between the major powers.

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