

HOW WATER IS PROTECTED DURING ARMED CONFLICTS?

WEBINAR

Monday, 9 December 2019
from 13:00 to 14:00

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
7 bis Avenue de la Paix, 1211 Geneva 2nd floor, De Mello Auditorium

The Platform for International Water Law of the Geneva Water Hub (GWH) and DiploFoundation are pleased to invite you to the webinar on “How water is protected during armed conflicts?”. This webinar is organized in the framework of the Distance Learning Course on “International Water Law & The Law of Transboundary Aquifers” delivered through the Continuing Education and e-Learning Centre of the University of Geneva.

Armed conflicts affect water in several ways: destruction and damage to water facilities, attacks against power plants providing water supplies, and the collapse of water treatments and sewage systems are some of these aspects. Moreover, continued hostilities and protracted armed conflicts may undermine the efforts to repair, maintain and operate water pumping and treatment facilities. Meanwhile, armed conflicts may also affect the environment and ecosystem of water resources.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also called the law of armed conflicts, contains rules protecting the access to water for the civilian population. Most importantly, in the conduct of hostilities, it is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable for the survival of the civilian population, including drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, both in international and non-international armed conflicts. This rule is closely connected to the prohibition of starvation as a method of warfare, which inherently includes a prohibition of deprivation the civilian population of water. Water itself is also protected as a component of the environment by the prohibition to use methods or means of warfare that are intended or expected to cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment, applicable in international and arguable also in non-international armed conflicts. Additionally, the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions include rules on the access to water for drinking and hygiene by prisoners of war and civilian internees respectively, and the Fourth Convention stipulates further obligations for the occupying powers to ensure food for the population, and public health and hygiene in the occupied territories.

The webinar will present the main features of the Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure and how water is protected during the conduct of hostilities.

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Programme

Chair: Prof. Jovan Kurbalija – Director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform

Ms Natasha Carmi –Lead Water Specialist, Geneva Water Hub/University of Geneva

The activities of the Geneva Water Hub

Dr Mara Tignino – Reader, Faculty of Law and Institute for Environmental Sciences, University of Geneva; Lead Legal Specialist, Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub

Overview of the Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure

Ms Öykü Irmakkesen - Researcher, Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub/University of Geneva and Teaching Assistant, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

The Protection of the Water in the Conduct of Hostilities

13:30-14:00 – Q & A