



TO SPARE WATER FROM ARMED CONFLICTS

Concept Note International Law Week

Side-Event on

Strengthening Legal Frameworks for Protection of Water in Armed Conflicts

Date: Tuesday, 22 October 2024, 8:00 - 9:45 am

Location: Permanent Mission of Slovenia, 630 Third Avenue, 20th Floor

RSVP by 18 October COB: <https://forms.gle/7cg2HvyaAmaf6SJ58>

There is an increasing trend in the weaponization of freshwater in contemporary armed conflicts. These practices deprive thousands of civilians from access to freshwater supplies which are essential to their life. Such impacts extend and accumulate over time and put at risk the health, the living conditions and the dignity of the population.

This event, organized by the members of the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflicts, aims to identify challenges in implementing current legal frameworks offering protection to freshwater and water infrastructure in armed conflict, as well as means to improve compliance.

Legal experts, practitioners and representatives of armed forces will discuss how to build a culture of compliance through awareness, further dissemination of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), clearer guidelines and training. They will also consider the implementation challenges related to the impacts of protracted conflicts.

Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflicts galvanises the efforts to protect water and water-related installations from the consequences of armed conflicts. Members are committed to promote and ensure respect for international law protecting freshwater, water-related installations and other essential services. The Alliance harnesses expertise from the development and humanitarian sectors to identify action, which can increase resilience in times of conflict and post-conflict situations. It also aims to improve preventive measures, and foster collaboration to reduce or mitigate civilian harm from armed conflicts.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the challenges in the interpretation and application of essential IHL principles (distinction, proportionality and precaution), the respect of which is essential to protect water infrastructure?
- What are the impacts of today's prolonged, urbanized and complex armed conflicts on the environment, and in particular access to water? How to improve the respect for IHL on the ground?
- To what extent does IHL address indirect and reverberating effects, particularly of the destroyed or damaged water infrastructure for civilians, in contemporary urbanized and prolonged armed conflicts? How to raise the awareness about indirect and reverberating effects in the international legal community?
- The media increasingly claims double standards in the application of norms of international law. How to address this claim and the risks of erosion of principles and norms of IHL?

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Opening remarks

- **Dr Marko Rakovec**, Director-General for International Law and Protection of Interests, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia
- **H.E. Ms Zsuzsanna Horváth**, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the UN

Interactive discussion

- **Dr Cordula Droege**, Chief Legal Officer and Head of the Legal Division, International Committee of the Red Cross
- **Mr Ernesto Granillo**, Humanitarian, Policy and Advocacy Specialist, UNICEF (TBC)
- **Mr Chris Jenks**, Senior Law Advisor, US Department of Defense (TBC)
- **Dr Mara Tignino**, Deputy Director, Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub
- **Mr Wim Zwijnenburg**, Project Leader, Conflict and Environment, PAX

Interventions from the Floor and Q & A Session

- **H.E. Mr Mahmoud Daifallah Hmoud**, Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN
- **H.E. Mr Eloy Alfaro de Alba**, Permanent Representative of Panama to the UN
- **Representative of Indonesia**

Moderated by: Dr Marko Rakovec, Director General for International Law and Protection of Interests, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia