



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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9th World Water Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 21-26 March 2022

High Level Panel

Protection of Water and Water Infrastructure Before, During and After Armed Conflict

This panel is an important milestone for ensuring better protection of water and water infrastructure, before, during and after armed conflicts. With the support of the Swiss Confederation, the Geneva Water Hub invites you to contribute to the discussion on the occasion of the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar.

About two billion people live in areas affected by armed conflicts, where destruction of water infrastructure is increasingly common. As detailed in the ICRC's [Urban Services](#) and UNICEF's [Water Under Fire](#) reports, the consequence on the most vulnerable communities is severe. When water and sanitation services are disrupted water-borne diseases and epidemics proliferate. To advance the protection of these communities, the Geneva Water Hub has developed the [Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure](#). While the main focus of this document is the clarification of norms of international humanitarian law applicable to water infrastructure,¹ the Geneva Principles also aim at enhancing cooperation on installations located on transboundary water resources in peace time and the protection of the human rights to water and sanitation at all times. This High-Level Panel will provide a unique opportunity to explore cross-sectoral linkages between the SDG 6 on water and sanitation and SDG 16 on peace.

Guiding questions:

- Who suffers most when water infrastructure is destroyed?
- To what extent can the current legal and policy regimes assist? What are the gaps?
- What action does the international community have to take towards this goal?
- How can civil society help?
- What research is required? (e.g. at the level of the collection of evidence to support causal chains)? What are the gaps in the water infrastructure protection regime?
- What steps can governments take in enhancing cooperation on water infrastructure on transboundary watercourses in peace time?

¹ See also Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention, UNSR Res. [2573 \(2021\)](#).



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***High-Level Panel
on the
Protection of Water and Water Infrastructure Before, During and
After Armed Conflict
Date: 22 March 2022
Time: 1.30 pm – 3 pm (90 min)
Location: Room 7, EXPO, Diamniadio (Dakar), Senegal***

Tentative Programme

Opening session:

Minister of Water and Sanitation of Senegal, H.E. Serigne Mbaye Thiam – 5'

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, H.E. Anže Logar – 5'

Minister of Water Resources of Iraq, H.E. Mahdi Rashid Al Hamdani - 5'

Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources of The Gambia, H.E. Lamin Dibba – 5'

Panel discussion: *How policy initiatives can help in protecting water in armed conflicts?* 40'

Head of Regional Delegation of the ICRC, Ms Valentina Bernasconi – Challenges on the protection of water and water infrastructures in the humanitarian sector: a practical view

WASH Senior Advisor Action, Contre la Faim, Dr. Jean Lapègue - challenges on the protection of water and water infrastructures in the humanitarian sector: recent developments

Director the Geneva Water Hub, Prof. Mark Zeitoun – The [Geneva List of Principles on the Protection of Water Infrastructure](#) and its political and policy implications

Moderation & Concluding words (action points / next steps)

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, H.E. Christian Frutiger, State Secretary and Head of the Global Programme, Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency - 5'