

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

Topic 3: Evaluating measures for the redistribution of energy sources in conflict affected and high-risk areas (CAHRAs)

*Research Report by Beatrice Bevilacqua and Emma Christensen*

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## 1. Definition of Key Terms

**CAHRA:** Conflict Affected and High-Risk Areas. All areas troubled by a state of armed conflict, fragile post-conflict areas, as well as areas witnessing weak or non-existing governance and security, such as failed states, often paired with widespread and systematic violations of international law, including human rights abuses.

**Failed State:** weak or non-existent governance and security including the absence of institutions capable of representing the state. Usually, the “failure” of a state takes place in countries whose government is considered to have failed at some of its basic responsibilities, for instance keeping the legal system working correctly, and providing public services.

**Conflict resources:** natural resources extracted, typically in the regions where the hostilities take place, with the sole purpose of perpetuating the fights during conflicts. The resources are either benefited from through sale or direct exploitation.

**UNEP:** United Nations Environment Programme. It is the leading global environmental authority in the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. It is responsible for the coordination of responses to environmental issues, sets the environmental agenda, and promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN.

## 2. Introduction

Identifying CAHRAs is not an easy task: there is an abundant amount of data that must be analysed in order to affirm that an area is truly in danger. Anyhow, in order to identify the areas which are affected by discordances it is indeed needed to discover what those are rooted in. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) suggests that in the last 60 years, at least forty per cent of all intrastate conflicts have had a link to natural resources and that conflicts involving natural resources have also been found to be twice as likely to relapse. In each of these conflicts, the fighting has been originally driven, in the majority of scenarios, by rivalry among neighbouring tribes; however, despite the hostilities, one of the most common factors which fuels them most is the desire to control valuable oil and natural gas resources. Energy in different cases could be either the primary objective of the conflict, where it is possible to observe that some parties may either try to secure the vital parts of the energy system, influence international energy flows or alter the structure of market systems in order to maintain their security, represent a mean in the conflict, where energy could be used as political tool to achieve non-energy-related objectives or, as previously stated, be a cause of the conflict. This is because oil and gas are the world’s most valuable commodities and currently constitute a major source of income, especially for the governments and corporations that control their production and distribution. Examples of energy system characteristics that can affect the risk of conflicts include the geopolitical concentration of primary resources, the number of exporters in the international energy market, the vulnerability of structures facing hypothetical attacks as well as the vulnerability of the users and the interconnections with other systems. In third-world countries, the issue is more problematic because by having an unstable government, the system is often corrupted and so ends up being the economy.

## 3. Background Information

Energy sources are probably the most critical thing a state can have power over, which is why they are the cause of multiple conflicts and they are closely related to issues of legitimacy, for instance states which try

to secure access to energy resources and in the process violate other nation's properties or international or national agreements. One of the best examples is the abundance of natural resources in Africa, hence the civil wars fought to gain control over them as well as the previous usage of these resources from the Europeans colonists, far before the current internal and local national governments. The reason CAHRAs have a shortage of energy resources, as well as any type of resources in general, is due to colonisation where French and English people took almost all of Africa's funds, leaving the countries to deal with the consequences to this day.

In terms of energy and prime resources rooted conflicts, on January 1st 2021 the EU Conflict Minerals Regulation published its long list of conflict-affected and high-risk areas from all over the world. This will, over time, begin to have a significant impact on responsible mineral sourcing and energy production by all companies. This Regulation will be fundamental for conflict minerals compliance. Importers that are subject to the Regulation will of course need to take the CAHRA list into account; but not only since the Regulation is likely to impact a large number of companies not directly subject to it. This will put pressure on other companies to follow this path and do as suggested.

#### 4. Major Parties Involved

Even though no universal official list of CAHRAs exists, we can roughly estimate the number of countries involved in this issue by looking at the various CAHRAs estimated lists that have been drawn up. The major nations which have been mostly affected by this issue, due to the great quantity of revenues from oil sales, are:

- South Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon, due to national civil wars: The beginning of the civil war in South Sudan is probably the most explicit and adequate example of energy source conflict: the first Sudanese civil war, lasting from 1955 to 1972, ended when the government granted more autonomy to its citizens. However, when oil was discovered, the Sudanese rulers repudiated many of their prior promises and gained control over the oil fields, causing another civil war, which lasted almost until the present day;
- Russia and Ukraine, whose fights not only damage the two major parties, but also obstruct and limit the flow of energy and gas to European countries which have for a long time relied on those sources;
- Syria and Iraq, equally affected since ISIS assumed control of Raqqathe, as it has become one of the dominant figures in the oil field, controlling all the energy and power in these two countries, but also in a very broad region of the Middle East;
- South Sudan, again, and Nigeria both because of the government attitude and actions, which have benefited from abundant oil revenues but endangered their own nations.
- Libya and Afghanistan, in a scenario mainly affected by violations of human rights parallel to their energy source and consuming crises;

#### 5. Timeline of Events

The struggle over energy resources has been a prominent factor in many conflicts throughout the past years, instances including:

- 1980-1988, Iran-Iraq war;
- 1990-1991, the Gulf War;

- 1983-2005, Sudanese Civil War;

Generally, the fossil-fuel factor is one of the most recent outbreaks of tension and at times fighting for the corresponding reason may seem less evident, but by going further in depth it is possible to see that each of these conflicts is at heart, oftentimes, an energy war.

There are lots of conflicts around the world, especially in the form of civil wars and it is a situation that has been taking place approximately from the 1950s. Conflicts have increased dramatically in the 2000s due to the certified increase of utilisation of these materials, but fortunately, around 2015 many of them reached or seem to be reaching a compromise. Even though there are still numerous conflicts today, they are not as widely spread as they once were.

## 6. UN involvement

The United Nations strongly acknowledges that “energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today” and considers the issue as a current and relevant one. Since the UN is aware of the issue it has set multiple goals, amid which one is ending conflict, and as so far operated through Six United Nations agencies and departments which, coordinated by the UN Framework Team for Preventive Action, have partnered with the European Union (EU) to aid countries in the process of identification, prevention and transformation of tensions over natural resource, mainly through prevention and peacebuilding programmes. Every November 6th, however, the UN celebrates the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. The UN and the Secretary-General also recognize the need to integrate questions of natural resources. That is why a new committee was founded recently: UNEA, the United Nations Environment Assembly.

## 7. Bibliography

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- <https://energypost.eu/twenty-first-century-energy-wars-oil-gas-fuelling-global-conflicts/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/observances/environment-in-war-protection-day>

## 8. Useful links

- <https://kumi.consulting/news-and-views/cahras-what-are-they-and-why-do-they-matter>
- [https://www.responsiblemineralsinitiative.org/about/faq/rmap/how-do-i-identify-conflict-affected-and-high-risk-areas-\(cahras\)/](https://www.responsiblemineralsinitiative.org/about/faq/rmap/how-do-i-identify-conflict-affected-and-high-risk-areas-(cahras)/)

- <https://www.ropesgray.com/en/newsroom/alerts/2020/12/conflict-minerals-compliance-european-commission-publishes-global-list-of-conflict-affected>