



Doc. 11741

09 October 2008

Armed conflicts and the environment

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Daniel DUCARME and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Despite the various existing international texts such as the Convention on the prohibition of military or any hostile use of environmental modification techniques (the ENMOD Convention), which came into force in 1978 and is regarded as the leading reference text on environmental protection during armed conflicts, and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention of 1949, prohibiting the use of ecological warfare, armed conflicts unquestionably still have adverse effects on the environment which may persist for years, decades or even longer.

In 1996, the International Committee of the Red Cross adopted "Guidelines for military manuals and instructions on the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict", which proposed that existing conventions should be properly implemented and complied with. Unfortunately, these guidelines have also gone unheeded.

The environment can be the victim of an armed conflict or can itself be used as a weapon. It can also be the actual source of a conflict.

It was the use during the Vietnam War of Agent Orange (a defoliant sprayed on the jungle) and the project to extend the monsoon season in Asia to make roads impassable that first alerted the public to the fact that environmental modification was being used as a weapon of war.

The effects of military activities on the environment are often more disastrous than the military operations themselves, creating problems such as damage to ecosystems, destruction of infrastructure, soil contamination and disruption of agricultural cycles. It is all the more difficult to reconstruct areas and countries after conflicts and restore normal living conditions when the people who have to do so are weakened and impoverished.

Examples of the kind of activities that can affect the environment during conflicts are deforestation, dam construction, the establishment of camps and the creation of infrastructure such as airstrips and bridges. People are also forced to move around and this damages farming land.

The Assembly urges the governments of Council of Europe member states and observer countries to comply to the letter with the legal instruments on the relationship between armed conflicts and the environment and to arrange awareness-raising programmes, aimed in particular at those in charge of military planning.

It also calls on the parliaments of the member states to take the lead and introduce legislative measures on the environment, particularly during armed conflicts, paying special attention to the issue of ecological crime.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

DUCARME Daniel, Belgium
BJARNADÓTTIR Guðfinna S., Iceland
ETHERINGTON Bill, United Kingdom
FALZON Joseph, Malta, EPP/CD
FARKAS Iván, Slovak Republic
IVANOV Ivan Nikolaev, Bulgaria
JAKAVONIS Gediminas, Lithuania
JAZŁOWIECKA Danuta, Poland
KOÇ Haluk, Turkey, SOC
LUNDGREN Kerstin, Sweden
MARQUET Bernard, Monaco, ALDE
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
MELO Maria Manuela, de, Portugal, SOC
PUCHE Gabino, Spain, EPP/CD
SUDARENKOV Valeriy, Russian Federation, SOC
TIMCHENKO Vyacheslav, Russian Federation, EDG
VIS Rudi, United Kingdom
WAALKENS Harm Evert, Netherlands
ZISSI Rodoula, Greece

1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialist Group