




Land and Conflict in the Arab Region

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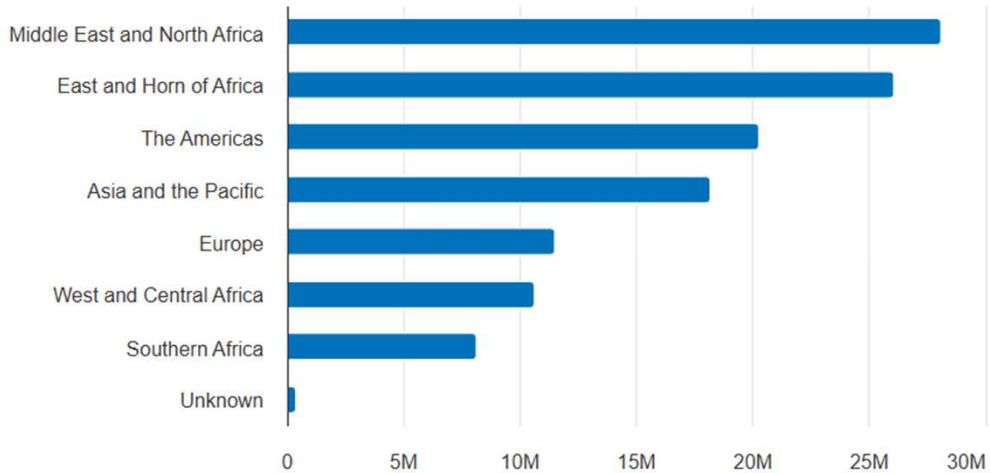


The Arab Region:

- One of the **most rapidly urbanizing areas** of the world: rate of 2.8% per year compared to 1.8% globally
- **Highest rates of population growth** in the world
- **Strategic geography and resource rich** attracting foreign military, political and financial interventions.
- **Ranked as the least peaceful region in the world** for the 10th year (2025 Global Peace Index).
- **Highest rate of forcibly displaced peoples across regions**

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Region of origin



From 2024 UNCHR overview of forcibly displaced peoples

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Land and Conflict

- **Land inequality among the highest in the world.** (The Gini coefficient over 0.65).
- **One of the smallest shares of arable land per capita in the world** (OECD-FAO, 2018).

Open land becoming increasingly scarce, so too do conflict.

- The Arab world cultivates 1/3 of its arable land only.
- Highest imports rates with 40% of population food insecure

Land can become a root cause for conflict, a trigger, a point of relapse, a bottleneck to recovery, and it can be a victim of conflict.

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Importance of further study on Land and Conflict

- Dearth of regional scholarship:
 - leaves analysis vulnerable to linguistic challenges and **misdiagnosis**
 - **Poorly crafted conflict resolution mechanism** can inflame conflict
- The need to correct the false “ethnic” narrative:

Much of the differences between ethnic or religious groups is in **reality competition over scarce resources**, created by the introduction of the **modern capitalist system, colonialism & neo-colonialism** augmented by **weak land governance & land degradation**

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APN's Regional Study

- How conflict and land are interlinked **to form the land and conflict nexus.**
- Identify the main drivers of conflict **rather than the triggers or symptoms**
- Case studies **relying on first-hand knowledge**
- Create a typology **of the land-conflict nexus.**
- Recommendations for **conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery.**

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Methodology

12 case studies were analyzed, covering local (village, community), regional (governorate), national (country), or transnational (includes cross border conflicts over land).

Case Study Set (1) : Land as a cause of conflict.

Used the (GLTN) root cause analysis framework (RCA) through identifying root causes, proximate factors, and triggers of the LRC.

followed by a discussion of conflict resolution efforts that have been taken.

Country	Case Study Set (1)
Morocco	Conflicts between nomadic pastoralists and farmers in the Souss region
Libya	Conflict over land rights in Libya's Western region
Algeria	Conflict over land rights in the Eastern region
Tunisia	The spark of the uprising: Conflict over land rights in Sidi Bouzid
Lebanon	Flare-up in a smoldering conflict over land in Akkar
Egypt	Conflicting land tenure claims in Abū Fānā
Morocco	Peasant land dispossession through real estate development in the Guich
Palestine	Settler-colonialism

Case Study Set (2) : Conflicts' impacts on land

followed by an assessment of impact resolution measures.

Country	Case Study Set (2)
Lebanon	Impact of land mines and Unexploded ordnance (UXO) from Israel's war on Lebanon
Yemen	Impact of war on productive land use and tenure
Lebanon	The War of the Mountain's effects on housing, land, and property rights in Jabal Lubnan
Syria	Wartime impacts on land use and Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights

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Typology of the Land-Conflict nexus in the Region

1) Land Issues as a Root Cause of Conflict

Type 1.1: Capitalism changing agrarian land relations in the world of pastoralists and farmers

1.1.1) Tensions between pastoralists and settled farmers due to changes in the value of land.

1.1.2) Conflicts emerging from the marginalization and dispossession of smallholders

(e.g. Eastern region of Algeria, Sidi bou Zid in Tunisia)

Land commodification brought initially by colonization then pushed by neo-colonial financial institutions

Type 1.2: Urbanization and the dispossession of communities (e.g. The Guiche in Morocco)

Type 1.3: Colonialism, settler colonialism and occupation (e.g. Palestine, South Lebanon)

Type 1.4: Conflicts associated with inequality in the distribution of land resources and in land-related investments (e.g. Libya's western Region)

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Typology of the Land-Conflict Nexus in the Region

2) Effects of Conflict(s) on Land

Type 2.1: Damages to the productive capacity of land and associated livelihoods.
e.g. Yemen, South of Lebanon

Type 2.2: Loss of housing and property rights
e.g. Syria

Type 2.3: Emergence or re-emergence of Land Related Conflicts
E.g. Syria , Yemen

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Analyzing the Land Conflict Nexus

Multiple cycles of influence, where one may impact the other continuously and at different degrees.

Conflict ➡ Land Issues ➡ Conflict (e.g. Yemen, Syria)

Land Issues ➡ Conflict ➡ Land Issues (e.g. Palestine)

Land is the foundation of social systems and is the stage of conflict itself.

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Land and Conflict Nexus: some lessons

- **Internal and external structural factors / Colonial and neo-colonial**
- **Extraterritorial obligations not respected** : do no harm/ proxy wars/sustaining conflict and occupation through financial, diplomatic & military support
- **Compromised International legal system**
- **Weak and politicized conflict resolution processes &** absence of country-owned reconciliation platforms
- **Triple nexus approach completely neglected**

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Recommendations to address root causes and impacts

Land Management

- Policy and regulatory Reform
- Plural Forms of Tenure
- Enhancing Land Equality
- Protection of Rural Livelihoods

Dispute Mechanisms

- Conflict Analysis
- Early Warning Mechanisms
- Transitional Justice
- Capacity Building Programs

International cooperation and Aid

- Do no harm
- Country ownership
- Integrating Land into comprehensive Responses
- Land Rehabilitation and Demining
- Regional Integration & coordination

International Law and Protection

- Ending Settler-Colonialism, Occupation, and Foreign Military Intervention
- Return, restitution & protection against forced displacement

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Settler colonialism in Palestine

- Indigenous population loses a minimum of 77% of historic Palestine in 1948
- Israel starts to annex Area C and B which is 82% of the remaining West Bank as well as Gaza
- **To control 96.2% of historic Palestine**
- “Greater Israel” ambition
- All Palestinian underground, overground and rainwater is under Israeli domination.
- Around 13 million forcibly displaced refugees (6 million formally registered)

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False colonial narratives



“A land without a people for a
people without a land”



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Trees are powerful narrators of Palestine's history

- Rich **agricultural heritage**
- 90% of olive orchards are **older than Israel**
- Palestine dominated 23% of **global** orange market in 1939

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Majority of Israeli attacks are against the Palestinian agricultural sector

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To erase Palestine's heritage.

Trees are living witnesses to Palestine's history. **Most Palestinian orchards are older than Israel.**





To expand colonial infrastructure.



Israel deforests Palestinian lands, **depleting already scarce resources and destroying thousands of wildlife habitats** to make room for illegal settlers.



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To destroy Palestinian livelihoods.

Around 100,000 families in Palestine **rely on olives as their source of income**, with an annual gross value of \$240 million, while the annual **cost of uprooted olive trees exceeds \$64 million.**





To weaponize food.

Palestinian trees are essential in **providing nutritious foods** and acting as a source of **fodder for livestock.**



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To drive farmers out of their lands.

Once Palestinian trees are uprooted, Israel falsifies an old land law **to illegally seize fallow Palestinian lands to build illegal settlements.**



It is much easier to confiscate fallow lands!

West bank illegal settler population more than quadrupled since Oslo “peace” accords

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Israel systematically poisons and degrades Palestinian lands

- Dumping sewage and hazardous waste
- Herbicide spraying
- stealing of soil
- Polluting and diverting water from the Jordan river



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APN In a nutshell

- An independent peoples organization
- Founded in the 2003
- Enhance sovereignty over food and natural resources
- Focuses on the Arab region, mainly areas impacted by conflict, occupation & settlercolonialism



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APN's Green Resistance



Agricultural Revival

keeping communities
rooted



Mobilization

of individuals and organizations



Research & Advocacy

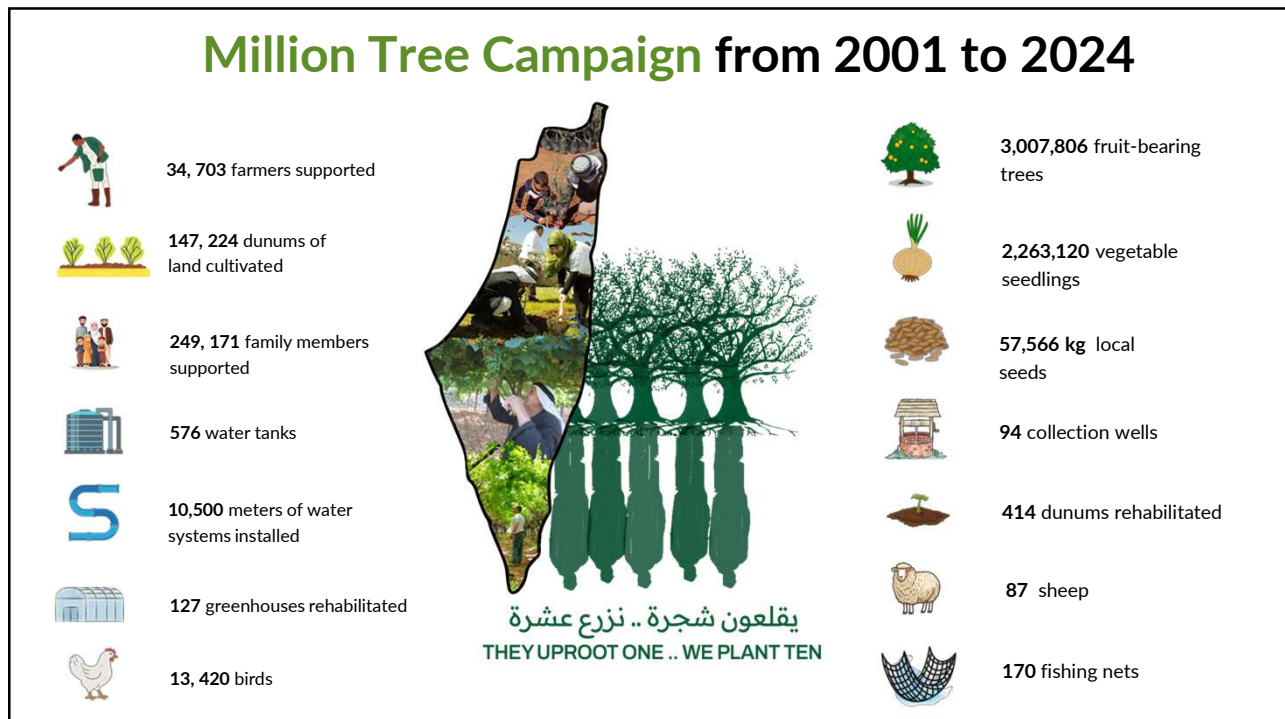
on environmental, agricultural,
and food policies at all levels



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Tulkarem



Hebron



Qalqilya

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Khirbet Al Samra -Tubas



Tal Al Rmeideh-
Hebron

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Our work in Gaza.



- Extensive projects following the wars of 2006, 2009, 2014, and 2021.
- We have planted over **459,000 fruit trees**
- Establishing **water infrastructure, greenhouses, cultivating crops, support to fishing, poultry & honey-making**

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The 2007 Siege : Starvation as collective punishment

- 17 years as **a concentration camp** - restricting access to land, sea water, food and inputs of production.

"We have to make them much thinner, but not enough to die," the idea being "to put the Palestinians on a diet."

Dov Weissglas

- In 2008 they **calculated the minimum caloric intake to be a little above death by starvation.**
- **Many invasions** since then targeting the agricultural sector
- **Over 65% food insecurity** in Gaza prior to the war

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The Death Diet: **Genocide & Ecocide**

- Dropping bombs 6 times the firepower of the Hiroshima bomb
- Using incendiary weapons that are then globally marketed as “battle proven”
- 98.5% of agricultural land destroyed or inaccessible or both
- majority of water infrastructure/ fishing ports / dairy farms destroyed etc.
- Systematic attack of humanitarian work
- UN announces a famine (shockingly delayed)

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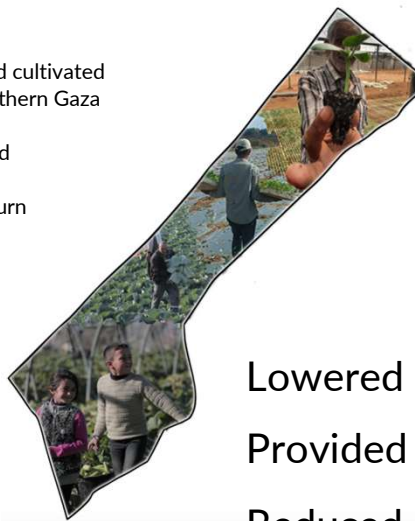


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Revive Gaza's Farmland: **Since March 2024**

What we have achieved:

-  1252 dunums of agricultural land cultivated across northern, central and southern Gaza
-  6260 tons of vegetable produced
-  565 farmers supported who in turn support over 3487 individuals
-  Greenhouses rehabilitated
-  Irrigation systems installed
-  Fishing nets distributed
-  Poultry distributed
-  2 agricultural wells rehabilitated, serving 6,000 individuals



What we are working on now:

-  Cultivating vegetables
-  Reviving water wells

Lowered prices in market
 Provided to the besieged
 Reduced reliance on middlemen

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International law for the strongest?

Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949:

- Article 35(3): “It is prohibited to employ methods or means of warfare which are intended, or may be expected, to cause widespread, long-term, and severe damage to the natural environment.”
- Article 54(2): It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, such as foodstuffs, agricultural areas for the production of foodstuffs, crops, livestock, drinking water installations and supplies and irrigation works, for the specific purpose of denying them for their sustenance value to the civilian population or to the adverse Party, whatever the motive, whether in order to starve out civilians, to cause them to move away, or for any other motive.

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All parties are liable.

Article 55. : Care shall be taken **in warfare to protect** the natural environment against widespread, long-term and severe damage. This protection includes a prohibition of the use of methods or means of warfare which are intended or may be expected to cause such damage to the natural environment and thereby to prejudice the health or survival of the population.

“Attacks against the natural environment by way of reprisals are prohibited.”

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What can we do:

- Support Restoration & Food Sovereignty **with concrete actions.**
- Enforce International Law and extra-territorial obligations **by all means possible.**
- Cut financial, academic, logistical ties with Israel **especially those linked to the military or enabling the occupation**
E.g. Pension fund investments, university collaborations with military corporations, transit and transport facilitation, agritech X military
- Join our campaign for the entry of seeds into Gaza.
- Work to integrate **ecocide in the legal framework**

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Arab Group for the Protection of Nature

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