

IISD Report: Climate change poses threat to peace and security in Middle East

A new report developed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), commissioned by The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, being launched this week in the Middle East, has found that climate change may hold serious implications for peace and security in the Levant.

Drawn from extensive consultations and workshops throughout the region, augmented by desk research, the report makes three key points:

1. The legacy of conflict in the countries of the Levant undermines the ability of countries and communities in the region to adapt to climate change. The history of hostility and mistrust in the region greatly complicates efforts to collaborate over shared resources, to invest in more efficient water and energy use, to share new ways to adapt to climate change and to pursue truly multilateral action on climate change. Ultimately, climate change presents an even more serious challenge than it would otherwise.

2. The report shows that climate change itself poses real security concerns to the region. It may increase competition for scarce water resources, complicating peace agreements. It may intensify food insecurity, thereby raising the stakes for the return or retention of occupied land. It may hinder economic growth,

worsening poverty and social instability. It could lead to destabilizing forced migration, increased tensions over refugee populations, the increased militarization of strategic natural resources and growing resentment and distrust of the West.

3. Nevertheless, the report points out there is much that national governments and authorities, civil society and the international community can do address the challenge of climate change, and in so doing, address some of the threats it may pose to regional peace and security. They can promote a culture of conservation in the region, help communities and countries adapt to the impacts of climate change, work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and foster greater cooperation on their shared resources.

The Press Release:

http://www.iisd.org/media/2009/june_2_2009.asp

The Report:

http://www.iisd.org/pdf/2009/rising_temps_middle_east.pdf

