

(Toxic) Waste Management as Challenges, Vulnerabilities and Risks for Environmental Security in Palestine

Abstract

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There is growing acceptance world wide that detrimental environmental actions transcend beyond political boundaries. This is especially the case with Palestinians and Israelis, who live within a small geographical area sharing ecological systems. Physical proximity and the sensitivity of shared resources make cooperation a basic condition for sustainable development.

The lack of due attention over the last three decades, coupled with weak legal instruments and huge developmental activities without due respect to environmental cooperation, has made it difficult for any one party to deal with the issue. The environment has been put on the back burner in favor of other pressing priorities.

A number of peace accords were signed between the PLO and Israel, most importantly, the Oslo II accords. Looking into these agreements, environmental issues were firmly on both parties' agenda, but these issues were felt to be discrete and lacking sufficient consideration.

The nature of the links, the intentions and the impacts, were not based on resources scarcity, mismanagement of resources or the unequal access to these resources. Environmental management and records were based on security issues alone.

It is believed that to be able to make a positive link between environment and conflict in the Middle East, especially in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a number of prerequisites are expected including appropriate infrastructure and institutional preparedness at the Palestinian side, a policy reform at the Israeli side, and modified cooperation agreements.

The impact of the current hazardous waste handling procedures in the West Bank and Gaza and the type of relations with the Israeli side is adding to the conflict and is triggering a renewed potential for unrest in the area.

Both parties have a vision for the future relations and cooperation modalities, it is important that a positive thinking is imitated today that might lead to a positive nature of a link once created.