Ebb and Flow

Water in the Shadow of Conflict In the Middle East and North Africa

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The region is experiencing the highest levels of forced displacement in the world with millions facing water insecurity.

7.2 million refugees

2.7 million hosted in MENA region

12.4 million internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing armed conflict
Countries in the region increasingly contend with policy issues at the nexus of water, conflict and forced displacement.

Key questions to examine the interplay of water, conflict and forced displacement in the Middle East and North Africa.

- Why and in what context does water contribute to conflict and forced displacement?
- Why and in what context does conflict contribute to water insecurity?
- Where do the forcibly displaced live?
- What water risks do they face?
While media reports and some research suggest that there is a direct link between water, conflict and forced displacement, the evidence suggests caution in invoking causal relationships.
Contrary to common belief, water risks are more often associated with cooperation than conflict.

Focus research and policy on role of water in building cooperation.
Countries in the region increasingly contend with policy issues at the nexus of water, conflict and forced displacement.

Key questions to examine the interplay of water, conflict and forced displacement in the Middle East and North Africa.

- Water as a driver of conflict and cooperation
  - Why and in what context does water contribute to conflict and forced displacement?

- Water as a casualty of conflict
  - Why and in what context does conflict contribute to water insecurity?

- Water as a source of vulnerability
  - Where do the forcibly displaced live?
  - What water risks do they face?
Water is increasingly a casualty and weapon of conflict.

Syria

457 water supply and sanitation assets have been damaged, including 2/3rds of the country’s water treatment plants and half of its pumping stations.

Instances of water infrastructure targeting in MENA, 2011-2018
Countries in the region increasingly contend with policy issues at the nexus of water, conflict and forced displacement.

Key questions to examine the interplay of water, conflict and forced displacement in the Middle East and North Africa.

Water as a driver of conflict and cooperation

Why and in what context does water contribute to conflict and forced displacement?

Water as a casualty of conflict

Why and in what context does conflict contribute to water insecurity?

Water as a source of vulnerability

• Where do the forcibly displaced live?
• What water risks do they face?
Water is among the main factors determining the vulnerabilities of those who are forcibly displaced.
Camps

Every year, flash flooding inflicts extensive damage to camps

Syrian households with disability in Jordan report lower rates of access to sanitation services
Cities and Informal Settlements in Country of Origin

**YEMEN**
18 million people do not have access to safe drinking water

**SYRIA**
25% of displaced people share sanitation facilities with at least 6 people

**LIBYA**
in 50% of the municipalities, forcibly displaced find water unaffordable
Cities and Informal Settlements in Country of Arrival

LEBANON
1 Syrian household in 4 is accessing highly contaminated drinking water

JORDAN
65% of Syrians in Jordan are highly vulnerable to water and sanitation risks

LIBYA
1 in 4 international migrants does not have enough water to drink
Climate change, soaring demands, and the changing nature of conflict mean that dynamics are likely to change

Climate change-induced water scarcity could reduce economic growth by 5-6%

Demand for labor could drop by more than 10%

Conflict changing, blurring lines between military and civilian.
And yet, water provides an opportunity to build resilience.
An integrated approach is needed for development actors to promote water security for the forcibly displaced and their host communities.
Policymakers will likely face trade-offs between short-term, uncoordinated measures to respond to immediate water needs and long-term measures needed to address structural water sector issues.

3 decision points at which-specific trade-offs shape which paths are taken:

1. Prevention and precrisis coordination and planning
2. Responding to protracted forced displacement
3. Preparing for recovery and return
Thank You

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