



Master Programme in European and  
International Law

winter term 2004

Public International Law  
(VAK 06-009)

Dr. Andree Kirchner, LL.M. (Stockholm)

## Environmental Security

### Significance of Environmental Security

“In the context of comprehensive international security, the significance of environmental security extends far beyond the environmental sector itself.”

[UNEP, Environmental Security, 1989]

wt 2004

[www.andreekirchner.de](http://www.andreekirchner.de)

2

## Environmental Security

- ✓ How does environmental stress affect security?
- ✓ What types of environmental stress may have the capacity to produce conflict?

wt 2004

[www.andreekirchner.de](http://www.andreekirchner.de)

3

## Environmental Security

### Dimension of Environmental Security

- ✓ Environmental Stress may be a result of a conflict
- ✓ Environmental Stress may be a cause of a conflict

wt 2004

[www.andreekirchner.de](http://www.andreekirchner.de)

4

## Environmental Security

### Threats to environmental security

- ✓ Environmental/climate change
- ✓ Depletion of the ozone layer/global warming
- ✓ Transboundary pollution
- ✓ Demand for renewable and non-renewable natural resources
- ✓ Availability of water (water scarcity and pollution of ground water)
- ✓ Depletion of fish stocks/food security
- ✓ Deforestation
- ✓ Atmospheric change
- ✓ Land degradation/soil erosion
- ✓ Human population growth and loss of biodiversity
- ✓ Etc.

wt 2004

[www.andreekirchner.de](http://www.andreekirchner.de)

5

## Environmental Security

### Action needed

- ✓ Security issues should also include environmental considerations
- ✓ “react-and-correct” → “foresee-and-prevent”
- ✓ Comprehensive threats assessment
- ✓ Risk analysis (e.g. list of hot spots)
- ✓ Exchange of views (co-operation, training)

wt 2004

[www.andreekirchner.de](http://www.andreekirchner.de)

6

## Environmental Security

### To achieve Environmental Security

#### On the global level by:

- ✓ Preventing or mitigating global environmental degradation,
- ✓ Managing the global commons (e.g. high seas),
- ✓ Preventing and managing global risks, and
- ✓ Collecting and exchanging information
- ✓ Monitoring and coordinating regional co-operation

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

7

## Environmental Security

### To achieve Environmental Security

#### On the regional level by:

- ✓ Defining eco-geographical regions
- ✓ Identifying international institutions
- ✓ Education, training and exchange of information, and
- ✓ Capacity building in elaboration of national and international law

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

8

## Environmental Security

### Conclusion

- ✓ Sensitize international institutions, e.g. ICJ
- ✓ Environmental security as a component of comprehensive international security
- ✓ Joint responsibility for environmental security
- ✓ Strategies based on sustainability

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

9

## Environmental Security

### Environmental related conflicts

- ✓ River-Water-Conflict
- ✓ Conflict resulting from Demography
- ✓ Ethno-Political-Conflict
- ✓ Cross-Border-Migration-Conflict
- ✓ Internal-Migration-Conflict
- ✓ Centre-Periphery-Conflict

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

10

## Environmental Security

### Centre-Periphery-Conflict

- ✓ People of periphery regions vs. centres of developing countries (including national elite and foreign investors)
- ✓ Difference of alternatives with regard to environmental problems
- ✓ Centre: some economical and environment- and energy-political alternatives
- ✓ Rural areas: restricted alternatives
- ✓ Compensation: large rural projects, e.g. farming for export, dams and mining projects

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

11

## Environmental Security

### Ethno-Political-Conflict

- ✓ Different socio-economical interests
- ✓ Line of conflict goes along with different ethnic groups in multi-ethnic societies
- ✓ Overexploitation (land, wood and water resources) → distribution conflicts over decreasing resources

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

12

## Environmental Security

### Internal-Migration-Conflict

- ✓ Migration (free or by force) from one eco-geographical region to another in one country because of degradation, water shortage, etc.
- ✓ Geographical origin → criteria for social and political conflict relationships between the groups
- ✓ Different interest with regard to the use of natural resources
- ✓ Sharing of power → political conflicts

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

13

## Environmental Security

### Cross-Border-Migration-Conflict

- ✓ Migration (free or by force) from one country to another (cross-border) because of degradation, water shortage, etc.
- ✓ Social and (socio-)political conflict potential
- ✓ Migrants because of environmental degradation may further conflicts, particularly in situations of social erosion, instability or existing conflicts
- ✓ Reason:
  - ✓ Poverty and underdevelopment
  - ✓ Problems related to development, e.g. part industrialisation, dams, urbanisation
  - ✓ Natural/social disasters, e.g. fludgings

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

14

## Environmental Security

### Conflict resulting from Demography

- ✓ Overpopulation in overexploited eco-regions → migration, etc.
- ✓ Ecological vs. economical carrying capacity of an eco-region
- ✓ Stronger competition on natural resources

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

15

## Environmental Security

### River-Water-Conflict

- ✓ Sharing of water resources (e.g. a water-basin or river) between two or more countries
- ✓ Depending on the country at the upstream top of the river
- ✓ Possible conflicts:
  - ✓ Degradation in quality
  - ✓ Degradation in quantity

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

16

## Environmental Security

### Video Presentation

#### Earth Report VI: Boiling Point

- Waters of the Nile
- USA/Mexico border
- Okavango river
- Arab/Israeli conflict

27 minutes

wt 2004

www.andreekirchner.de

17



Public International Law  
(VAK 06-009)

Dr. Andree Kirchner, LL.M. (Stockholm)

**Further information:**

<https://elearning.uni-bremen.de>