

**International Conference organized by ANR IMAGIN-E and CAREP
December 10–11-12, 2026 - Paris**

Ecologism of War and Conflict in the Middle East and the Mediterranean

This conference invites participants to reconsider contemporary conflicts in the Middle East and the Mediterranean as fields shaped by multiple forms of violence against the living, but also as spaces of recomposition. In these contexts, ecopolitical alternatives are being explored and practices of restoration are emerging, laying the groundwork for new social, economic, political, and ecological models.

Scholarship on environmental justice and inequality has extensively documented how the ecological crisis and violence against the living unevenly affect different contexts and social groups (Martinez-Alier 2003; Cutter 1995; Larrère 2017; Givens et al. 2019; Deldrève 2020, 2023). Research on war, by contrast, has tended to focus on the everyday experience of violence, on trajectories of armed engagement, and on forced displacement. The ecological consequences of war have received far less attention. Yet the environmental damage caused by conflict contributes to the long-term - often irreversible - degradation of living environments.

Recent work has begun to rethink the temporality of contemporary wars by focusing on their toxic remnants and enduring traces, considering the time required for both human and ecological recovery. Moving beyond a strictly “military ontology” (Griffiths, Rubaï 2025), which centers on the spectacular moments of armed violence, these approaches broaden our understanding of what counts as violence. War is no longer treated as an event but as a structure (Khayyat 2022; Griffiths, Rubaï 2025; Touhouliotis 2018). The notion of “toxic infrastructures” (Touhouliotis 2018) significantly extends the temporal and spatial reach of conflict, as well as the governmental technologies it entails (Khayyat 2022; Griffiths and Rubaï 2025). Wars thus unfold over a long period of time, during which it is difficult and controversial to pinpoint a beginning and an end (Hermez, 2017). More broadly, the notion of conflict also encompasses antagonisms, aggression, and resistance arising from structural violence (Hébert 2006), dispossession, and asymmetric power relations, as seen in contexts of colonialism (Pappé 2013) and authoritarian rule.

Our initial hypothesis is that conflicts in the Arab and Muslim worlds render violence against the living particularly acute and perceptible, giving rise to forms of ecologism grounded in a strong sense of necessity. These have been described as “existential ecologism” in that they directly and visibly call into question the very possibility of existence (Latte Abdallah 2024). Bringing together research on the ecological effects of war (Braverman 2009, 2023; Yildirim 2023; Zeybek 2025; Reno 2020; Pugliese 2020; Henig 2019; Nixon 2011; Austin, Bruch 2000), on industrial and extractive activities (Kurtiç 2025; Ahmann 2024; Lerner 2010; Petryna 2002; Fortun 2001), and on collective action and prefigurative practices (Frère and Jacquemain 2013; Monticelli and Escobar 2022), this conference seeks to highlight the experiences and practices of those who seek, imagine, and act within degraded environments

or ruined worlds, and who develop alternative forms of multispecies cohabitation (Gan, Tsing, Swanson & Bubandt 2017; Haraway 2020 [2016]).

What impacts do war and structural violence have on the living in the Arab and Muslim worlds? How are relationships to environments thought and politicized? What forms of justice and restoration are envisioned by institutions, activist collectives, and ordinary citizens in response to such violence? Under what conditions do ecopolitical alternatives emerge, and how? Particular attention will be paid to lived experiences, material conditions, and the transformation of social imaginaries, perceptions, and sensibilities. The conference will explore how people affected by destruction, contamination, and dispossession rethink their ties to the world and to one another, reconfigure their relationships to the living, revive neglected forms of knowledge, and engage in practices of care and restoration.

This conference, which is open to a wide audience, will not be limited to presentations by researchers. Activists involved in ecopolitical and alternative collectives, as well as artists will also be invited to contribute.

Participants are invited to submit contributions addressing one or more of the following thematic sections :

Section 1 – The Ecologization of Contemporary Warfare

The destruction of living environments and lived worlds is not merely a “collateral damage” of contemporary conflicts, but rather a strategic dimension of contemporary warfare. The concept of the “ecologization of warfare” describes situations in which the atmospheric and environmental conditions are deliberately targeted, degraded, or rendered uninhabitable (Sloterdijk 2009; 2016). In the Middle East, recent decades of armed conflict have systematically targeted biodiversity and vital resources (water, fertile soils...), food sovereignty, local economies, and the basic conditions of territorial viability. These strategies are often accompanied by large-scale military-industrial projects that durably transform and alter the targeted regions.

This section analyzes such practices as genuine forms of ecological disruption whose effects extend well beyond the immediate timeframe of armed conflict. By identifying and quantifying these impacts - whether they fall under the category of “tactical destruction” or emerging forms of “ecocide” - the aim here is to grasp their systemic consequences for societies: resource depletion, weakened agricultural systems, food insecurity, soil and air pollution, landmines, forced displacement, land grabs, resulting from an intertwining of environmental, political, and economic causes, etc. Conflicts exacerbate inequalities and often reinforce social violence. The aim is to shed light on the interconnections between environmental violence, social violence, and structural uncertainty.

Section 2 – Experiencing and Naming Environmental Violence

This section explores everyday experiences and emerging forms of ecologism in contexts shaped by violence and erasure resulting from conflict, industrial, military and extractivist activities. How do environmental toxicities and forms of violence affect the living, and how are they rendered visible and perceptible by conflict? How are these phenomena described and understood by the individuals and collectives who experience them? What characterizes the forms of ecological critique emerging across different contexts? How is the handling of rubble and waste perceived, particularly when it may contribute to the erasure of evidence of war? What “emic” temporalities and spatialities of violence against the living are experienced by those directly affected? To what extent do they challenge or, conversely, align with institutional periodizations and definitions?

This section further examines the words and vernacular categories mobilized by social actors to describe the disasters and ruins produced by conflict, and places them in dialogue with the concepts developed in scholarly literature. Can these phenomena be understood in terms of ecocide, “cosmocide” (Labou Tansi 1973), “carceral toxicities” in Iraq (Alkhudary 2026), of “futuricide” (Latte Abdallah 2025) or as an “environmental Nakba” in the Palestinian context (Qumsiyeh & Abusarhan 2020)? In Lebanon, should they be framed as collapse (*inhiyar*) or catastrophe (*karitha*)? More broadly, the aim is to trace the circulation of these concepts and the evolving grammars of ecologism across the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and beyond.

Section 3 – Governing War Toxicity: From Decontamination to Justice

War leaves behind widespread and persistent contamination: soils saturated with heavy metals, polluted groundwater, and more. This section examines the toxic legacies of conflict, including massive quantities of rubble, waste, unexploded ordnance, and landmines. Mapping contaminated sites remains highly challenging due to limited data, restricted access to satellite imagery, insufficient local capacities, and the inaccessibility of certain areas.

The implementation of decontamination practices often entails enormous costs, requires specialized technologies, and creates a dependence on international aid and external expertise. We will explore the practical aspects of decontamination, from the methods used to the complex issue of waste storage. Where does toxic debris end up, and what new forms of contamination might it generate? To which landfills or incineration sites is this waste transported, and what contamination does it cause at these locations (Sze, 2006; Boudia & Jas, 2019; Boudia et al., 2021)?

After a conflict, restoring ecosystems is not merely a matter of engineering or technical expertise: it is a political, social, and memorial act. The principles of “green reconstruction” (soil remediation, restoration of agricultural land, and rehabilitation of degraded urban spaces) may provide opportunities to reclaim territories, rebuild social ties and foster local innovation and new economic opportunities. However post-war reconstruction in which external public or private actors (developers, speculators, etc.) are involved, can produce new forms of dispossession (Ibrahim-Bacha, forthcoming 2026). Post-conflict environmental governance can be co-opted by the same elites or power networks that fuel inequalities. The key issue of democratic governance - which requires the inclusion of local populations, civil

society organizations, and local knowledge - thus becomes central to avoiding a superficial “green” reconstruction and ensuring that it does not reproduce external dependency or asymmetries of expertise.

Transitional justice that ignores environmental damage is doomed to remain incomplete. How can environmental accountability be established in wartime ? How can effective justice be guaranteed for populations exposed to environmental harm, who are often voiceless and without recourse? What about transparency regarding environmental data, which is too often classified or manipulated?

Section 4 – Prefigurative Practices, Alternatives and Ecopolitics

This thematic section explores the prefigurative practices through which actors experiment alternatives to dominant models in the here and now. It aims to follow not only the processes through which collectives are formed and sustained, including the conditions of their emergence and potential obstacles, but also the processes of definition, reflection, organization, and transformation within these collectives (Dewey 2010 [1927]). Through embodied practices, actors develop horizontal forms of organization and alternative relationships to the living. Such collectives may include community farms, cooperatives, urban and rural commons, learning gardens, local seed banks, short supply networks, etc. (Latte Abdallah 2022; Spera 2026). Rather than simply addressing demands to the state, they mobilize the repertoires of prefigurative politics (Leach 2013; Monticelli and Escobar 2022). Although still understudied in the Middle East, such practices have expanded in recent decades throughout this region, where states are often seen as authoritarian and/or failing (Latte Abdallah and Spera 2025).

Contributions under this theme will explore the formation of these commons - material, ecopolitical, and affective - as responses to environmental destruction. What conditions enable their emergence? What transformations and obstacles do they encounter? What tensions and contradictions remain unresolved? Contributions may explore the processes of self-institution (Castoriadis 1975) of these collectives, as well as their framing, organization and repertoires of action (sacralization of space in Turkish Kurdistan, economic resistance - *iqtisad al-muqawama* - in Palestine, autonomy, autochthony, agroecology, etc.). Particular attention will be paid to situated practices of living, cultivating, caring, repairing, or sharing.

Section 5 – Multispecies Worlds and Possible Futures

This last section explores how actors imagine and enact livable and desirable futures in militarized, ruined, or toxic environments. Across the Middle East and the Muslim world, collectives are engaged in documenting, representing, and reimagining spaces beyond destruction. They work to protect ecosystems, preserve endemic species, and revive threatened forms of knowledge. Deeply rooted in local histories, their initiatives combine invention and reinvention of traditions, renewed historical ideas and modes of production, glocal inspirations, and translocal practices - at the intersection of memory, social creativity, and utopia. They contribute to political, social, and artistic imaginaries that make visible the

“feral effects” of infrastructural violence, understood as the forms of life that emerge in the midst of military and industrial projects (Tsing et al. 2025).

How are multispecies relationships redefined in degraded environments? How do these practices contribute to the reconfiguration of habitable worlds? What forms of multispecies attachment and resistance emerge? What material, affective, and sensory dimensions shape these imaginaries? What visions and narratives of the past, present, and future do they mobilize? In doing so, we will examine the capacity of individuals and communities to project into the future, their “horizons of expectation” (Koselleck 1985): how do these multispecies worlds give rise to other ways of living, learning and enacting justice ?

Practical Information

The conference welcomes contributions on ecologism of conflict across the Middle East and the Mediterranean (including the Maghreb, Mashreq, Eastern Mediterranean, Kurdistan regions, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, as well as Sudan, the Sahel, the Caucasus, etc.).

Proposals (in French or English) should include a title, an abstract (max. 2,000 characters), and a short biographical note. They should be submitted by **June 30, 2026** to :

Stéphanie Latte Abdallah (stephanielatteabdallah@gmail.com)

Isabel Ruck (isabel.ruck@carep-paris.org).

Juliette Duclos-Valois (juliette.duclos@ehess.fr)

Bénédicte Florin (benedicte.florin@univ-tours.fr)

Simone Spera (simone.spera@univ-amu.fr)

Samuel Vock-Verley (verleysamuel@gmail.com)

Organizers

Stéphanie Latte Abdallah – CNRS Research Director (CéSor, EHESS); PI ANR IMAGIN-E

Isabel Ruck – Head of Research and Scientific Coordination, CAREP Paris

Juliette Duclos-Valois – Postdoctoral Researcher, ANR IMAGIN-E ; Associate Researcher, CéSor and CETOBaC (EHESS)

Bénédicte Florin – Associate Professor, University of Tours (CITERES); Institut Universitaire de France; Co-PI ANR IMAGIN-E

Simone Spera – Postdoctoral Researcher, IREMAM-CNRS, member of the ANR IMAGIN-E

Samuel Vock-Verley – Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Anthropology, York University, member of the ANR IMAGIN-E