



Permanent Mission of the
International Union for Conservation of Nature
to the United Nations

United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting
Freshwater Resources and Related Infrastructure under Attack -
Protecting Water in Armed Conflict – Protecting Civilian Lives

Statement delivered by the Permanent Observer of IUCN to the UN, Dr Sofie Jaffe

New York, 23 May 2025

Thank you chair,

IUCN would like to thank the organizers of today's important meeting, and I am also glad to announce we are about to join the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflict.

As we have heard today from many speakers, water, a natural resource, is increasingly being used as a weapon of war. This is why sustainable water management cannot wait until the conflict is over – simply putting in place stop gap measures to provide water on a short-term basis might actually lead to escalating conflict when water resources are used in an unequal and unsustainable manner. Water security considerations need to be integrated into broader humanitarian and development policies. Environmental impact assessments should be done as soon as possible, even before the cessation of active hostilities to assess damage to water resources and identify long-term solutions.

In protracted crisis, the main challenge is often that there is a total lack of long-term investment in water and sanitation systems that has at times persisted for decades. Instead of simply enhancing short term water supply we need to promote sustainable water management practices to ensure long-term resilience. This includes the development of integrated water resource management plans, community-based water management initiatives, freshwater ecosystem restoration, actions to improve and maintain the integrity of water quality for society, and the use of technology for efficient water usage and monitoring.

To do this we need to build the capacity of the UN system, including peacekeeping operations and humanitarian actors on water resource management and integrate the humanitarian coordination system on water with longer term development planning systems, working closely with national authorities. Failing to restore and protect water resources erode the conditions needed to build a lasting peace and we look forward to future discussions on how the international community can take meaningful action on this issue.

Thank you
