

## Environmental Threats and Their Impact on Human Security in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: A Study in Non-Traditional Security Challenges

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Received: 15/08/2025 ; Accepted: 20/01/2026 ; Published: 21/06/2026

### Abstract:

Environmental security is a vital and governing instrument in the matter of sustainable environmental rights, encompassing the restoration of environments damaged by military operations, the mitigation of resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and biological threats that may lead to social unrest and regional conflict. As a term employed by scholars and practitioners, environmental security calls first and foremost for the preservation of sound linkages between environmental and security conditions. This requires governments and civil society organisations to raise warnings about the causes of natural environmental degradation alongside threats from organised violent groups, and to raise awareness of the harm each poses to the cohesion and stability of human society. At the domestic and regional levels, environmental degradation or resource scarcity—resulting from the aggravation of population growth, inequity in wealth distribution, and global environmental

change—constitutes an important factor in political stability and the prevention of violent conflict, both within states and in their neighbourhoods. Military, security, and intelligence institutions are required to assume a greater role in protecting the environment from all that harms it. Environmental security must accordingly gain wider currency through every available means, so that it may supplant the Cold War and its associated concepts that remain entrenched among peoples.

**Keywords:** Environmental security; threats; resource scarcity; civil society; global environment

### Introduction

Since the major transformations that reshaped international relations after the [Cold] War, fundamental revisions have been made to both the concept of security and the nature of the security threats facing the international order. These transformations brought sweeping changes in the pattern of interaction, most notably the retreat of the military factor in the face of the rising

economic factor, and the emergence of new security threats that differ in nature from traditional threats. These new threats are characterised by their ambiguity, non-military character, trans-boundary scope, opaqueness of origin, and unpredictable timing; they include organised crime, terrorism, illegal migration, environmental pollution, natural disasters, global warming, and climate change, among others. Against the background of these shifts, the concept of human security emerged as a comprehensive framework that encompasses all post-Cold War security concerns—economic, political, cultural, social, and environmental. This concept focuses its analysis on the individual as the primary referent of security, and it carries new content, including the environmental dimension, by treating environmental risks as novel security threats. From this premise, the following central research question is posed:

***How do environmental threats affect the reality of human security in the Eastern Mediterranean region?***

This central question gives rise to a number of subsidiary questions:

- What do we mean by security and environmental threats?
- How have international transformations affected the concept of security?
- What are the dimensions of security in international relations?
- What is the impact of environmental security on the Eastern Mediterranean region?

To answer these questions, the study is organised into four sections:

- The Conceptual Framework of Security and Environmental Threats
- The Impact of International Transformations on the Concept of Security
- The Dimensions of Security in International Relations
- The Impact of Environmental Security on the Eastern Mediterranean Basin

## **1. The Conceptual Framework of Security and Environmental Threats**

For decades, security was defined from a single perspective—that of the state—that is, within its narrow framework of "national security." Most thinkers and researchers adopted the concept of security from a single angle: the focus on state sovereignty and the protection of national interests. Countervailing trends, however, promoted concepts and definitions of security in its expanded form, moving away from military and material dimensions. The various definitions of this concept will be presented below.

### **1.1. Definitions of Security**

**Arnold Wolfers** defined security in an article published in **1952** entitled "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol" as follows: "*In its objective meaning, it measures the absence of threats to acquired values; in its subjective meaning, it measures the absence of*

*fear that such values will be attacked.*"<sup>1</sup> This is one of the most widely cited definitions among scholars, and it focuses on the central values of the state.

**Giacomo Luciani** defined it as: "*the capacity to resist any external aggression.*"<sup>2</sup> This is a straightforward definition focused on protecting the state from external aggression.

**Walter Lippmann** held: "*A nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain those values by victory in such a war.*"<sup>3</sup> This definition concentrates on the military dimension of the state in confronting threats to its core values.

**Booth and Wheeler** argued: "*Individuals and groups can only achieve stable security if they refrain from depriving others of it; this is achieved when security is viewed as a process of emancipation.*"<sup>4</sup> This definition emphasises the necessity of freedom from fear.

**Robert McNamara** argued: "*Security is not military hardware, though it may involve it. Security is not military strength, though it may involve it. Security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development.*"<sup>5</sup> The emphasis here

is on the developmental rather than the military dimension of security.

**Barry Buzan** defined security as "*the effort to be free from threats and fear, and the capacity of the state to preserve its national interests and independent identity*"—a definition that underscores the primary role of the state in achieving its own security.

**Amin Huwaydi** defined it as: "*the measures taken by the state within its capacity to preserve its existence and interests in the present and future, taking into account international change.*"<sup>6</sup> This definition focuses on national security and the preservation of the state's existence, to the neglect of other social dimensions.

**Ole Wæver** stated: "*Security can be regarded as a speech act: treating something as a security issue accords it paramount importance, thereby requiring urgent action that legitimises the use of special means outside the normal political process to address it.*"<sup>7</sup>

**Working definition:** "Security encompasses all the measures and procedures adopted by the state to achieve its security and its economic, social, and political interests through the elaboration of a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving the well-being of peoples."

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol," *Political Science Quarterly*, 67, no. 4 (December 1952): 485.

<sup>2</sup>Thierry Balzacq, "Qu'est-ce que la sécurité nationale," *La Revue internationale et stratégique*, 52 (Winter 2003–2004): 38.

<sup>3</sup>John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics*, 1st Arabic ed., trans. (Dubai: Gulf Research Centre, 2004), p. 414.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Thamer Kamil al-Khazraji, *International Political Relations and Crisis Management Strategy*, (Amman: Dar Majdalawi, 2009), p. 322.

<sup>6</sup>Adil 'Abd al-Jamra Thajil, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>7</sup>Thierry Balzacq, op. cit., p. 38.

## 1.2. Definition of Environmental Threat

According to Alexandra Knight, the term "environmental threat" is used to refer to the threats posed by environmental change and degradation, which place human life and living conditions—or, in other words, human security—in direct jeopardy.

Brian White and Richard Little argue that global environmental change and all issues related to it represent the new security problem, which must be addressed with the same urgency as national defence. If security is defined as the absence of threat, then the most severe threats to the survival of societies are environmental threats.

## 2. The Impact of International Transformations on the Concept of Security

Security studies evolved from strategic studies, in which security was defined in a narrow manner essentially focused on states and military factors, and the elimination of insecurity was treated as the supreme objective states sought to achieve. With the end of the Cold War, however, new and more complex approaches emerged—a complexity that resulted from new wars and conflicts, particularly following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of its republics, such as Yugoslavia, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These developments were accompanied by a debate on the broadening and deepening of

security studies as an academic field, while realism sought to preserve the narrow definition of security.<sup>8</sup>

With the end of the Cold War and the changes on the international scene, currents emerged calling for the widening of the concept of security to engage with the issues arising in the current security environment. A diverse range of security subjects was accordingly needed—encompassing society, humanity, the individual, and states alike—as well as a diverse range of security sectors: economic, political, societal, environmental, and military.<sup>9</sup>

The Cold War generated political, economic, social, and normative transformations that had a profound impact on the concept of security and the field of security studies as a whole. These transformations necessitated a re-examination of the content of security and its expansion to encompass new issues—especially as the military dimension receded and other dimensions came to the fore, carrying new threats unknown to security studies specifically and international relations generally, such as migration, terrorism, the environment, and organised crime.

The following is an account of the repercussions of the end of the Cold War and their effect on the concept of security:<sup>10</sup>

- The broadening of the security studies agenda: this entailed the reformulation of the concept of security beyond the

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<sup>8</sup>Stuart Croft, "What Future for Security Studies?," in *Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 501.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ilyas Tawazi, "Security and Migration: A Study of French Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period," (MA thesis in Political Science and International Relations, specialisation in Strategy and Futures Studies, 2012/2013), pp. 28–33.

state as a primary referent, and the discussion of human rights and sustainable development and their impact on international security.

- Growing interest in new alternative levels of security to replace the state-level, such as societal security and human security.
- The declining salience of national security due to the emergence of a global community as an alternative to local or national community.
- The emergence of the new international order under the leadership of the United States, entailing a shift in the concept of security as a result of the changing international scene—through the rise and intensification of transnational interactions and sub-national threats, which led to the growing importance of the normative and civilisational variable in international relations.
- The emergence of non-state international actors such as governmental, regional and international organisations, and international non-governmental organisations, in addition to the growing role of individuals in the international system.
- The increase in internal civil conflicts, particularly those involving acts of violence committed against civilian

populations by states; examples include Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, and Rwanda.

- Technological development in the field of armaments, which has wrought changes in the concept and significance of military alliances, and a profound shift in the concepts and variables of security studies, such as power and sovereignty, which now carry connotations commensurate with the direction of international systemic transformations.
- The success of the European integration experience and the emergence of the European Union as a global pole.

Critical studies attempted to address the deficiencies of the realist approach, rejecting the equation of security with war and calling for a more positive conceptual basis. This effort was led by Johan Galtung with his call for "Positive Peace" (*Positive Peace*), and Kenneth Boulding with his concept of "Stable Peace" (*Stable Peace*).<sup>11</sup>

The impetus for reconsidering the concept of security was further reinforced by the Egon Bahr report submitted to the Palme Commission in 1982 under the title "Common Security," which argued that focusing on military risks in addressing the security dilemma was unrealistic, as there were other risks of an environmental and economic nature. This led to the adoption of a broader

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<sup>11</sup>Adil Zaqqagh, "Reconceptualising Security: Community Security Research Programme," accessed 5 March 2019, 14:53, at:

[http://www.geocities.com/Adelzeggagh/reconceptualizing\\_security\\_research](http://www.geocities.com/Adelzeggagh/reconceptualizing_security_research).

concept of security that took on multiple names: *Comprehensive Security*, *Security Partnership*, *Mutual Security*, and *Cooperative Security*—though despite this multiplicity of designations, none of them transcended the traditional boundaries of the concept, within which the state plays an exclusive role.<sup>12</sup>

### ***The Events of 11 September 2001 and Their Implications for the Concept of Security***

The events of 11 September 2001<sup>13</sup> in the United States of America confirmed the necessity of revisiting the concept of security, and that the realist concept of security would remain—to some extent—the governing and predominant framework in the field of international relations and the most appropriate for interpreting security phenomena.<sup>14</sup>

The events revived Samuel Huntington's theory of the Clash of Civilisations, which held that conflict would occur for cultural reasons between different civilisations, and classified Islamic civilisation as the foremost civilisation posing a threat to the West.<sup>15</sup>

In the wake of these events, the discourse in global political literature shifted toward terrorism, and the matter became a subject of

heated debate in international forums. The emergence of asymmetric threats—which require new theories to interpret them, given their distinctive and varied characteristics in terms of organisation, armament, and objectives, as entities that are transnational in character—became a central preoccupation of the scholarly community.<sup>16</sup>

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be concluded that these new variables contributed to the broadening of the security studies agenda, and consequently to the transcendence of the reductionist view of the concept of security that prevailed in the post-Cold War period. This reflects the fading and retreat of the realist, state-centric approach based on military strategies and the protection of national security, and the emergence of new approaches that have cast their shadow over the international arena—particularly following the multiplication and diversification of the sources of threat: terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.

### **3. The Dimensions of Security in International Relations**

In his book *People, States and Fear*, **Barry Buzan** sought to broaden security studies to encompass political, economic, societal, environmental, and military

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>\* The events of 11 September 2001 in the United States involved the striking of the World Trade Center's twin towers and the American Department of Defense (the Pentagon) in New York and Washington D.C. using civilian aircraft. For further detail, see: Usama Murtada al-Sa'idi, *The United States of America and the United Nations in the Post-Cold War Period*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Dar al-'Ilm wa al-Iman, 2014), p. 114.

<sup>14</sup>"The Theory of the Clash of Civilisations and American Policy," accessed 13 February 2019, 14:05, at: [www.olsakher.com/showthread.php?t=113837](http://www.olsakher.com/showthread.php?t=113837).

<sup>15</sup>Muhammad Sa'di, *The Future of International Relations: From the Clash of Civilisations to the Humanisation of Civilisation and the Culture of Islam*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2006), pp. 321–322.

<sup>16</sup>Usama Murtada al-Sa'idi, *The United States of America and the United Nations in the Post-Cold War Period*, 1st ed. (Lebanon: Dar al-'Ilm wa al-Iman, 2014), p. 118.

dimensions, leading to the introduction of new units of analysis: the international level, the regional level, the local level, society, the nation, the community, and the individual.<sup>17</sup>

Buzan divided security into five interacting fundamental dimensions, each of which will be examined in turn.

### 3.1. The Societal

This dimension concerns how social stability and cohesion are achieved and how identity and culture are preserved.<sup>18</sup> According to Buzan, security requires a referent object in response to the question: security for whom? His answer is: security of the state—although he acknowledged the existence of other security subjects, he remained realistic in his conception; societal security (the security of migrants, identity) remains, in his view, linked to the state. As for the question of what and who must be secured, Buzan answers: the security of communities.<sup>19</sup>

The Copenhagen School contributed to the development of the societal dimension of security. Wæver proposed shifting the referent object of security from the state to society: security is no longer premised on the survival of states, but on the survival of individuals and

peoples. A number of prerequisites for achieving societal security are identified:<sup>20</sup>

- Cohesion among members of society.
- A sense of national belonging.
- Commitment to religious belief.

The societal dimension may thus be characterised as a new dimension of security in an attempt to broaden the latter and transcend its traditional formulation: it serves as a bridge between the security of the state and the security of individuals.

### 3.2. The Economic

The United Nations Development Programme addressed the economic dimension of security in 1994, noting specifically that it encompasses the individual's employment for the purpose of securing an income enabling them to access their right to work in self-sufficiency.<sup>21</sup>

The leading researchers reached a consensus that the economic dimension of security means the provision of a suitable climate for the achievement of economic growth, which serves to preserve the stability of the country and prevent its exposure to serious economic problems that threaten its security, and the state's capacity to access

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<sup>17</sup>Juwayyida Hamzawi, "The European Security Conception: Towards a Comprehensive Security Architecture and Strategic Identity in the Mediterranean," (MA thesis in Political Science, specialisation in Maghrebi and Mediterranean Security Cooperation Studies, Hadj Lakhdar University, Batna, Faculty of Law and Political Science, 2010/2011), p. 50.

<sup>18</sup>Salim Buskin, "Regional Environment Transformations and Their Implications for Algerian National Security," (MA thesis in Political Science and International Relations, specialisation in International Relations, Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, 2014/2015), p. 25.

<sup>19</sup>Juwayyida Hamzawi, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>20</sup>Hanan 'Abd al-Razzaq, "The Impact of the Security Dilemma on the Internal Stability of the State: A Study of the Spanish Model since 1936," (PhD dissertation in Political Science and International Relations, Mohamed Khider University, Biskra, 2016/2017), p. 28.

<sup>21</sup>Asma' Darghum, "The Environmental Dimension of Human Security," (MA thesis in International Relations, Department of International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Constantine, 2009), p. 41.

external markets with major economic powers.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.3. The Military

This dimension focuses on the defensive capabilities of states and their perceptions of one another's intentions. It is among the most operative of all dimensions, and any disruption to it is capable of exposing the state to numerous risks and threats—reflecting the linkage between national security and military power and armed action, or what may be termed *international military security*.<sup>23</sup>

Researcher Stephen Walt noted: "*Military power matters, but it cannot be the sole guarantor of national security; military threats never represent the only threats in the new environment.*" Although Walt acknowledged non-military phenomena such as pollution and poverty, he categorically refused to incorporate them into the concept of security, thereby affirming the primacy of the military dimension in defining the meaning of security.<sup>24</sup>

This dimension confines the concept of security to a single variable: the security of the state against external aggression, to be achieved through the formation of highly capable armed forces for the protection of national security.

### 3.4. The Political

Within this dimension, security is defined as denoting the territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereignty of the state, and working to protect them from all threats—internal or external—in order to guarantee the achievement of the state's interests and objectives and the preservation of its centrality and the protection of its existence.<sup>25</sup>

Two types of objectives through which states seek to ensure their political security may be distinguished:<sup>26</sup>

- **Self-regarding objective:** The creation of defensive means—that is, military forces—and the necessity of increasing them.
- **Adaptive objective:** The transformation of the international environment in such a direction that aggression against the state becomes unavailable, through the state playing an effective role in the international system.

### 3.5. The Human

A number of definitions have been offered for the human dimension of security. The first initiative to define human security came with the Human Development Report of 1994; the most prominent agreed-upon definition is the United Nations definition:<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Juwayyida Hamzawi, op. cit., pp. 51–52.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>24</sup>Hanan 'Abd al-Razzaq, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>25</sup>Adil ibn 'Abd al-Hamza Thajil, op. cit., p. 332.

<sup>26</sup>Mamduh Shawqi Kamil, *National Security and International Collective Security*, (Cairo: Dar al-Nahda al-'Arabiyya, 1985), p. 67.

<sup>27</sup>An'am 'Abd al-Karim Abu Mur, "The Concept of Human Security in the Field of International Relations Theories," (MA thesis in International Relations, Department of Political Science, University of Gaza, 2013), pp. 43–44.

*United Nations:* "Human security is far more than the absence of violence and conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care, ensuring the security of individuals, achieving economic growth, and the prevention of conflict." In this definition, security is not linked to the state; instead, another actor is introduced: the individual.

The human dimension thus places the individual at its core. The Human Development Report of 1994 identified seven dimensions of human security.<sup>28</sup>

- **Economic security:** encompasses the importance of a guaranteed income for individuals sufficient to meet their basic needs and desires.
- **Food security:** means that all people at all times have physical and economic access to basic food.
- **Environmental security:** working to protect human beings from environmental damage and to preserve environmental resources from pollution.
- **Health security:** the provision of healthcare and appropriate medical treatment for all individuals, and working to prevent the spread of disease and epidemic.
- **Personal security:** the physical and psychological protection of the human being from threats, whether from other individuals or from the state.

- **Community security:** the security that individuals derive from their membership of a family, local community, or ethnic group, which can provide them with cultural identity and safeguard the identities and cultures of communities.
- **Political security:** respect for human rights to freedom of expression, the provision of a democratic environment, and the protection of individuals from discrimination.

On the basis of the foregoing, it may be concluded that these five dimensions do not operate in isolation from one another; they are interactive and work together in a powerful network of interconnections—each one defining a central node in the security problematic.

#### 4. The Impact of Environmental Threats on Eastern Mediterranean States

The Mediterranean Sea is regarded as one of the most polluted maritime regions in the world, with thousands of tonnes of toxic waste pumped directly into the sea every year. Heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants constitute a serious threat to human health and marine life, particularly in coastal areas that receive high levels of industrial liquid waste, solid waste, and domestic sewage—including pollution, rising sea levels, ocean floor warming, and ocean acidification—in addition to the overexploitation of resources and

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<sup>28</sup>Wasila Qannufi, "The Human Right to Security between the Human Security Approach and the Principles of International Law," (PhD dissertation in

Public Law, Department of Law, University of Sétif 2, 2017), pp. 36–38.

unsustainable forms of tourism that damage the marine environment across various parts of the region. Within this framework, the various effects of environmental pollution in the Mediterranean—which vary from one area to another based on the levels of development of the countries bordering the sea—may be examined. For reference, pollution is defined by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean as "the introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy into the marine environment, including estuaries, which results or is likely to result in such deleterious effects as harm to living resources and marine life, hazards to human health, hindrance to marine activities including fishing and other legitimate uses of the sea, impairment of quality for use of sea water and reduction of amenities." The environmental threats to the Mediterranean have two dimensions—air and water—and these threats vary in proportion based on the development levels of the countries bordering the Mediterranean.<sup>29</sup>

The Eastern Mediterranean encompasses Turkey to the north, and Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and the Gaza Strip to the east, with Cyprus at its centre. The region faces a range of major climatic and environmental threats:

#### **4.1. Global Warming**

Global warming affects the Eastern Mediterranean through ocean acidification, increased salinity, rising sea levels, and the

loss of biodiversity. Reports indicate that the Eastern Mediterranean has experienced severe drought due to a significant rainfall deficit and the evaporation caused by intense warming, together with an increased associated demand for water and population growth. These major regional threats—to which social unrest, wars, and population displacement, particularly in Gaza, also contribute—have played a key role in a marked decline in fish stocks, an increase in invasive species, and summer heatwaves.

#### **4.2. Oil and Gas Exploration and Heavy Maritime Transport**

These activities have had major effects on the social and economic conditions of the countries of the region, particularly in the context of resource conflicts, coastal urbanisation, and coastal marine pollution—which has led to increased harmful algal blooms, drought, and related forest fires. The environmental impact on the Eastern Mediterranean is manifest in the expansion of invasive species resulting from the recent widening and deepening of the Suez Canal, driven by high levels of maritime traffic—particularly for energy resource tankers—combined with inadequate biosecurity. Marine biodiversity is also threatened with destruction as a result of increased pollution from oil exploration and drilling operations in the region, leading to the loss of important species particularly in coastal and benthic areas such as coral reefs and coral gardens. Added to this is overfishing and the resulting problems with fish stocks, which has led to the loss of

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<sup>29</sup>Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the

Mediterranean, 25 November 2020, available at: [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7096/Consolidated\\_BC95\\_Ara.pdf?sequence=10](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7096/Consolidated_BC95_Ara.pdf?sequence=10).

fisheries income particularly in Gaza in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli practices against Palestinians.<sup>30</sup>

#### **4.3. Noise Pollution and the Extinction of Marine Resources**

Noise harms turtles and various vertebrates in breeding areas and affects the habitats of monk seals and dolphins, alongside air pollution that impacts human beings in maritime and coastal areas, and the loss of subsistence economies of small fishing communities. It is projected that more than 20% of fish and invertebrates exploited in the Eastern Mediterranean will become extinct under the pessimistic scenario, and many marine species may migrate due to noise and the warming of Mediterranean waters in search of a suitable living environment. The increase in plastic, pharmaceutical products, organic waste, and other toxic substances, heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) compounds, pesticides, and antibiotics—all of which are growing substantially on the coasts of Eastern Mediterranean countries—represents a further dimension of this crisis.

#### **4.4. Limited Access to the Common Areas of Maritime and Coastal Zones**

The restricted access to the common maritime and coastal zones shared among the countries of the region affects social cohesion, development, empowerment, and the well-being of all social groups, and may encourage tensions and conflicts between countries—leading to the negative impact of

environmental degradation on the social conditions of the various populations of coastal areas and fishermen on the shores of the Mediterranean. All of these effects generally contribute to rising inequality and the erosion of social and economic well-being, despite the existence of many drivers of change and opportunities for reducing environmental degradation and improving the condition of the sea and marine life in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

#### **Conclusion**

Through the foregoing analysis, the study has arrived at the following conclusions and recommendations:

- The end of the Cold War provided the impetus for the emergence of new concepts that place the individual as the unit of analysis and as the foundation of international interactions; whereas realism had confined the concept of security to the traditional conception focused on state security and its protection from external threats.
- The concept of human security has brought about an epistemological and methodological rupture at the level of security studies: the primary interest is now the guarantee of human security and well-being.
- Among the most dangerous threats to life in the Mediterranean basin and in every part of the global ocean is climate change, which affects the

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<sup>30</sup>Salim Buskin, "Regional Environment Transformations and Their Implications for Algerian National Security," *op. cit.*, p. 30.

marine environment and is likely to accelerate rapidly, increasing seawater temperatures, intensifying coastal erosion, altering salinity and currents, causing serious declines in biodiversity, and producing major changes in the richness and functional diversity of marine fauna and flora. This in turn affects the economies of many Mediterranean countries, particularly those on the southern and eastern shores.

- Despite the enormous potential for renewable energy investment in Mediterranean countries—particularly on the southern shore, including Algeria (solar energy)—these potentials remain underexploited; cheap fossil fuels continue to represent a strategic wager for the various countries of the region, both exporters and importers. The importance of fossil fuels is further heightened by recent discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, and prospective studies indicate the possibility of the countries of the region entering into conflicts and wars over the discovered energy resources, without the slightest consideration for the marine environment and the consequences of drilling and oil extraction on the region. All the gains in economic and human development achieved over the past decades are now at stake under the threats posed by the continuing advance of climate change and pollution, owing to the inadequacy of

regulatory mechanisms resulting primarily from the lack of general law enforcement—which impedes sound management of environmental issues.

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