

ENVIRONMENT + CONFLICT + PEACE

Exhibition Catalogue



This exhibition was included in the First International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding, which was made possible through the generous support of the following institutions:

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Cover image: © Nichole Sobecki. An armed policeman stands beside a riverbank swelled from a flash flood the night before that left several people dead outside Geerisa, Somaliland. As Somalia gets hotter and drier, it is also more susceptible to deadly flash floods when eventual rain hits the parched earth.

Curators' Statement

Environment + Conflict + Peace. It's a simple formulation that represents a complex dynamic. It involves armed conflict, possibly the greatest ongoing human tragedy the human race is responsible for. And the environment, which both sustains human life and drives conflict. And peace ... an opportunity to transform conflict and environmental mismanagement into long-term good.

The challenge is how to go from the negative impacts we have on the planet and with each other to the solutions we need to move forward in a positive way.


Environmental peacebuilding offers a framework for understanding and transforming the environment and conflict dynamics to a sustainable peace. While diverse disciplines—such as political science, economics, geography, and conflict and peace studies, as well as natural sciences—offer academic tools that can be deployed, they are incomplete.

Photography offers a powerful, complementary approach to communicate truths. It can transcend language and politics, engaging its viewers to highlight both the challenges and solutions, expanding both our intellectual and emotional understanding of environmental peacebuilding.

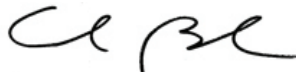
This exhibition was organized in conjunction with the First International Conference on Environment + Conflict + Peacebuilding, in Irvine, California from October 23-25, 2019. It highlights contributions from two featured photographers — Nichole Sobecki and Lena Wacha — who share series of photos from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Tanzania. We also recognize the contributions from the UN Environment Programme, which generously shared selected photos from diverse conflict-affected countries taken by its staff and consultants — including Albert Gonzalez Farran, Paige McClanahan, and Mazen Saggat. From the many submissions in response to the open call for photos, we have selected photos by Mouneb Taim and Anthon Jackson.

It is worth noting that curating this exhibition was tough. There were few existing photographic projects that truly sought to explore the complex linkages between environment, conflict, and peace. Recognizing this, we call on photographers, journalists, and artists who want to go deeper in their work to explore Environment + Conflict + Peace.

And, as an informed audience for this kind of work and attendees at a new conference exploring environmental peacebuilding, we have an opportunity. A chance to recognize the transformational power of narrative and to encourage—and support—those who can help us think more deeply about and connect more intimately to the context, the characters, and the meaningful work and related solutions that will help bring to life the complex dynamics behind the simple but critically important formulation: Environment + Conflict + Peace.



Jason Houston



Carl Bruch

Jason Houston is a freelance photographer, a Senior Fellow in the International League of Conservation Photographers and a Fellow at Wake Forest University's Center for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability. His photography explores how we live on the planet and with each other, looking at issues related to the environment through the lens of human experience. For more of his work, see: <https://www.jasonhouston.com>.

Carl Bruch is the President of the Environmental Peacebuilding Association, directs International Programs at the Environmental Law Institute, and has been an avid photographer for more than 90% of his life.



Danakil Cattle Drive

© Anthon Jackson
anthonjackson.com

Afar herdsmen in Ethiopia's Danakil Depression drive their dwindling cattle towards the shrinking waters of Lake Abhe on the Djibouti border. Grazing lands in this arid, lawless territory are the cause of deadly clashes between the Afar and neighboring Somali tribes. The photo was taken at the terminus of the Awash River, the goal of a 1930s expedition led by the legendary explorer Wilfred Thesiger. Traveling on foot from Asaita (with the aid of camels), we reached the terminus ourselves after a five-day trek.

Featured Photographer: Nichole Sobecki



Nichole Sobecki is a photographer and filmmaker based in Nairobi, Kenya. She is represented internationally by the photo agency VII.

Nichole graduated from Tufts University before beginning her career in Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria, focusing on regional issues related to identity, conflict, and human rights. From 2012-2015, Nichole led Agence France-Presse's East Africa video bureau, and was a Rory Peck Awards News Finalist for her coverage of the Westgate mall attacks in Kenya. In 2018 she was awarded by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights prize in new media for her images documenting Europe's response to the African migration crisis. Nichole's work has been recognized by Pictures of the Year, the One World Media Awards, the Alexandra Boulat Award for Photojournalism, The Magenta Foundation, and The Jacob Burns Film Center, among others.

She is also a contributor to Everyday Africa, a collection of images shot on mobile phones across the continent, and an attempt to showcase the moments missing from dramatic news images — everyday life that is neither idealized nor debased.

Nichole aims to create photographs and films that demand consideration for the lives of those represented – their joys, challenges, and ultimately their humanity.

She has completed assignments throughout Africa, the Middle East and Asia for National Geographic, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Newsweek, Time, Foreign Policy, The Financial Times Magazine, The Guardian, and Le Monde, and her work has been exhibited internationally. Nichole is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and available for assignments worldwide.

For more of her work, see: <https://www.nicholesobecki.com/>.

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Climate for Conflict

Climate for Conflict is the story of the mother who didn't flee civil war but fled the drought. Of the fisherman pushed into piracy by empty nets and a depleted, lawless sea. Of the young farmer who felt the pull of the extremist group Al Shabab when his crops failed for multiple seasons. Somalia has long been beset by extremes, but climate and environmental changes are compounding these problems and leading to the end of a way of life. "With this weather pattern, Somalia or Somalis will not survive," says environmentalist Fatima Jibrell. "Maybe the land, a piece of desert called Somalia, will exist on the map of the world, but Somalis cannot survive." As one of the places hardest hit by climate change, Somalia is a harbinger for the rest of the world. The following photos were taken in April, July, and August 2016.



Opposite (from top):

1. Dheg Mohamed takes apart her home before loading the materials onto a cart to be moved. Several successive seasons of low rainfall left the well in her family's hometown of Aynabo, Somaliland, dry, forcing them to relocate elsewhere.
2. Somali children with prayer boards at a madrassa in Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp. In 2011, a severe drought pushed tens of thousands of people from their homes, swelling the ranks of Dadaab camp. With the International Organization of Migration predicting 200 million environmentally displaced people by the year 2050, countless more Somalis will likely be pushed across the country's borders and to the seas.
3. Women dry their clothing on bushes after doing their laundry in a rare puddle on the roadside in a drought-stricken area of northwestern Somalia.
4. An animal market outside Geerisa, one of the epicenters of the severe drought in Somaliland.





Clockwise (from top):

1. An armed policeman stands beside a riverbank swelled from a flash flood the night before that left several people dead outside Geerisa, Somaliland. As Somalia gets hotter and drier, it is also more susceptible to deadly flash floods when eventual rain hits the parched earth.
2. The bodies of sheep and goats that died due to the severe drought in Somaliland lie where they fell in an animal market outside Geerisa, one of the epicenters of the crisis.
3. Somalia's arid landscape as seen from inside a decaying colonial building in the Somaliland town of Sheikh.
4. A woman walks through a cactus field in a drought-stricken area of western Somaliland, a semi-autonomous region in the north of Somalia.



Fazila helps her father, Hafizullah, harvest the few grapes that survived both the drought and the root disease caused by it. When rainfall and snowmelt were enough to water his crops, Hafizullah earned \$4,000 a year selling raisins. Now, he's lucky to earn \$1,000. His daughters' teaching salaries mean the family can eat and keep a roof over their heads. According to the Brookings Institution, educating girls can help increase the resilience of families, communities, and countries — and keep them all safer.

Secret Weapon

It may be hard to imagine a grape field as a battlefield, but in Afghanistan, farms are where a new war is being waged. Farmland across the country is drying up, cracking the earth, and attacking the only way of life the majority of the country has ever known. Consecutive and severe drought over the last three years hit two out of three provinces in Afghanistan, exacerbating the chronic food insecurity that is caused by decades of conflict and recurring natural disasters. This story explores the connections between climate change and war and the powerful role of girls' education in combating both. As farmers are caught between two forces they can't control — climate change and terrorism — families and communities that show the most resilience have a secret weapon others don't: daughters with diplomas who hold down jobs and earn an income.

Clockwise (from top-left):

- 1: In Deh'Subz, a village on the outskirts of Kabul province, Wazila serves lunch for her family. Her father, a grape farmer, used to be able to support the family selling raisins. Now, thanks to their teaching salaries, Wazila and her sister, Fazila, are the breadwinners in the family. "If my daughters didn't work? I can't imagine it," Hafizullah says. "I'd have to think about growing opium poppy."
- 2: Afghanistan is the world's biggest supplier of heroin. Here, in Kunar Province, on the Pakistan border, Ali sows opium poppy seeds. This illicit crop that fuels Afghanistan's insurgency is — often reluctantly — grown by drought-stricken farmers because it requires less water than other crops. And there's a market for it. In Afghanistan, heroin is a \$60 billion industry.
- 3: At the Zabuli Education Center, an all-girls' school in Deh'Subz, Afghanistan, founder Razia Jan distributes donated winter coats to students whose families are struggling more than ever because of drought. Most of the students' fathers are farmers. The worst drought in a decade, combined with prolonged conflict and poverty, have pushed families across Afghanistan to the brink. About 13.5 million people are severely food insecure, meaning they are surviving on less than one meal a day.
- 4: "I am not alive, but I am not dead." Khadija is in Afghanistan's only hospital burn unit in Herat recovering from third degree burns over 80 percent of her body. She attempted suicide by self-immolation to escape from an abusive marriage. Khadija and her sister were forced into early marriages by their father after the drought caused him to lose his farm and he could no longer support them.



Featured Photographer: Lena Mucha



Lena Mucha is a German photographer based between Berlin and Colombia.

After graduating with a Master of Social Anthropology and Political Science from the University of Cologne in 2011, she started photography whilst working in Colombia with different NGOs. Her work focuses on stories related to human rights, gender aspects, and social changes within societies and ethnic groups that are mainly under-reported.

Lena is a frequent collaborator with The New York Times and works for clients internationally such as National Geographic, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Washington Post, CNN, Wall Street Journal, Der Spiegel, GEO, Doctors without Borders, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Caritas International, and Johanniter. She works mainly across Europe, Latin America, and South and East Africa. Her work has been featured in single and collective exhibitions in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Peru, and Spain. Her work has won awards, received honorable mention, and been shortlisted by numerous institutions on three continents. Languages: German, Spanish, English, French.

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Two children walk back to their shelter while night breaks at Kalenge refugee camp, in Tanganyika province.

A Forgotten Conflict – IDPs in Tanganyika

“Our children and old people are dying. We need the government to take action, so that we can go back to our villages,” says Kisompo Selemani, chief of the Twa at the Kilunga refugee camp.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide. According to the UN, nearly half a million people were displaced in the southeastern province of Tanganyika between July 2016 and March 2017. Villagers fled their homes there to escape intercommunal fighting between Twa pygmies and Luba, a Bantu-speaking ethnic group.

Around 250,000 internally displaced persons are now living in refugee settlements in and around the city of Kalemie, the capital of Tanganyika province. The majority of them have limited access to healthcare, and face extreme shortages of food, water, and shelter.

Doctors without Borders (MSF) undertook an assessment in April 2017 and found that the mortality rates of children under 5 are equivalent to that expected during the acute phase of an emergency. But people here have been living in these conditions for months. In 2017, I documented the life of these refugees while accompanying Doctors without Borders, who are providing emergency assistance in several camps in Tanganyika.

Opposite (from top):

1. Pungu Asani, 55, lives with his wife and their 14 children in Kalonda refugee camp. Due to intercommunal fightings between Pygmeans (Twa) and Bantu, they were displaced from their home village Kibige.
2. A Bantu woman and child in one of the rooms of the Circle Filtsaf primary school in Kalemie, where they found shelter after escaping the violence in their home village.
3. The Mukuku refugee camp is located close to Kalemie. The security situation in the area is unpredictable, and people continue to flee violence and gather in and around Kalemie for safety.
4. A woman and her children sell items like cigarettes, torches, and yucca (cassava tubers) in their small shop at Kilunga refugee camp.



United Nations Environment Programme



**United Nations
Environment Programme**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) is the leading environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. It provides leadership and encourage partnership in protecting the environment by informing, inspiring, and enabling nations to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. It assesses global, regional, and national environmental conditions and trends; develops international and national environmental instruments; and strengthens institutions for environmental management.

UN Environment's Crisis Management Branch conducts environmental assessments, mitigates risk, strengthens institutions for environmental governance, integrates environmental considerations in reconstruction, and strengthens international and regional cooperation around the environment. In addition to aiding nations during and after disasters and conflicts, the Branch also works to find innovative and efficient environmental solutions to help countries prepare for future crises and leverage frontier technologies for monitoring environmental security risks.

The staff, volunteers, and scientists within the Crisis Management Branch are dedicated to working with nations that have been affected by natural disasters, industrial accidents, and human-induced crises. They have conducted operations in more than 40 countries—including, for example, Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Sierra Leone, and Sudan—to organize clean-up activities and deliver high-quality environmental expertise to governmental institutions.

This exhibition features a sampling of photographs taken by a UN Environment staff and consultants, including Albert Gonzalez Farran, Paige McClanahan, and Mazen Saggar. The photographs have been grouped into five themes that reflect common areas of engagement for UN Environment and its partners in conflict-affected situations: Pollution and Waste, Livelihoods, Pastoralism, Forests, and Water.

UN Environment has an extensive Flickr photostream from various conflict and disaster-affected situations: https://www.flickr.com/photos/unep_dc

Pollution and Waste

War produces waste and pollution directly and indirectly. Conflict destroys infrastructure, creating rubble (often with hazardous pollutants such as asbestos) that needs to be disposed of safely in order for the country to recover. Indirect effects of conflict are more widespread as governance systems are weakened, and people focus on simply surviving. This exhibition includes illustrative examples of conflict-related waste and pollution from Lebanon, Nigeria, and Sudan.

In order to protect public health and help combat environmental pollution, UN Environment works with governments, international organizations, industry, civil society, and the public to help develop solutions for managing waste and remediating environmental hotspots.

Opposite (from top):

1. Plastic Bottles on Minefield – Sudan (2006)
The dumping of waste on minefields and on top of unexploded ordnance creates a major safety problem.
2. Haret Hreik – Lebanon (2006)
The destruction of the Haret Hreik Security Square in southern Beirut generated a significant amount of solid waste requiring appropriate disposal.
3. Hydrocarbon Pollution – Nigeria (2010)
Hydrocarbon pollution on surface water in Ogoniland, Nigeria.
© Mazen Saggar, www.mazensaggar.com
4. Waste Management – South Sudan (2012)





Plastic Fields in Eldweim – Sudan (2006)
Solid waste management practices throughout the country are uniformly poor. Wind-blown litter is also an endemic problem in the countryside around major towns.



Field Full of Waste – Sudan (2006)
Waste and plastic bags cover the landscape outside of big settlements.

Wadi El Ku – Sudan (2014)
© Albert Gonzalez Farran



Water

In many areas affected by conflict, water is both an urgent need and constantly under assault. There are numerous demands on water, many contaminants, and often few places to access safe drinking water. Climate change and natural disasters are disrupting water cycles, making water scarce. This often places disproportionate burdens on women and girls, who also are kept out of school and at risk of assault while collecting water.

Women have important roles to play in improving water management during and after conflict. UNEP works with women, communities, and local governments to promote the sustainable management of water sources.

Opposite (from top):

1. Low Visibility during a Haboob – Sudan (2006)

Haboobs (Sandstorms) are a common phenomenon like this one in Northern Darfur.

2. Waiting for Water – Sudan (2006)

The water container queue at a wellpoint in Abu Shouk camp. Each water point services over a thousand people.

3. Water Point in Abu Shouk IDP Camp – Sudan (2010)

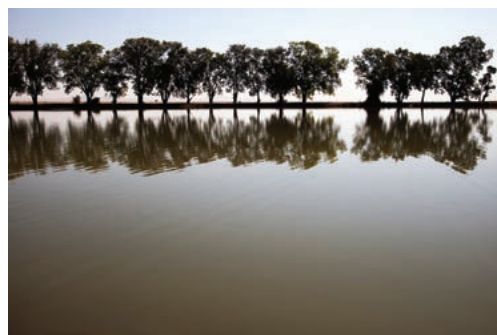
84,000 people collect water every day from the only water point in the area. Each family has the right to collect water twice per week with, as maximum, 15 recipients of 8 liters each. They pay only 10 recipients and they get other 5 for free. In the morning, mothers and children spend hours on the queue and, then, after filling the recipients, they bring them to their homes (some kilometers away) usually by donkeys or just walking.

© Albert Gonzalez Farran

4. Wadi El Ku – Sudan (2014)

UNEP, together with the EU and the Government of Sudan, launched a new catchment management project in the Wadi El Ku, one of the largest seasonal water courses in North Darfur. This landmark project aims to improve the livelihoods of conflict-affected people in and around a stretch of the Wadi El Ku near El Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur, through the improved management of local natural resources. The area has seen enormous population growth over the past 10 years, and currently it is estimated that well over 700,000 people depend on the Wadi for their water supply and livelihoods (agriculture and livestock). The result is widespread deforestation, falling groundwater levels, and increasing environmental degradation, which in turn erode livelihoods and undermine economic recovery.

© Albert Gonzalez Farran



Livelihoods

In most conflict-affected countries, 60 to 80 percent of the population relies directly on land, water, forests, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources for their livelihoods and food security. Conflict degrades both the resource base and the capacity of institutions to effectively govern natural resources, leading people to adopt often dire coping strategies. This exhibition includes examples from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, and South Sudan.

UN Environment and many other inter-governmental, governmental, and non-governmental organizations commit substantial funding, personnel, and effort helping countries and communities rebuild livelihoods affected by conflict.

Opposite (from top):

1. Agriculture – South Sudan (2006)
2. Fishing Boats near Tombo, Sierra Leone (2011)
Artisanal fishing boats near Tombo on the Western Area Peninsula. It is estimated that illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing costs Sierra Leone as estimated \$30 million annually.
© Paige McClanhan
3. Youngsters Working the Mines – DR Congo (2010)
Artisanal miners work under desperate conditions. A green transition in the DRC should primarily focus on creating decent jobs, particularly for youth, by building on the country's embryonic social economy and promoting "green" jobs. By prioritizing concrete and environmentally-friendly job creation, a green economy would help ensure inclusive economic and social development and strengthen the foundations for a lasting peace in the DRC while maintaining the country's exceptional natural capital.
4. Artisanal Gold Mining – DR Congo (2016)
Field mission to assess mercury contamination at the Butuzi artisanal gold mining site in South Kivu carried out in March 2016. Assessment findings are used to provide technical advice on reducing mercury pollution and related occupational and environmental impacts within a pilot project implemented by Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) aiming to establish conflict-free and legal supply chains for artisanal gold in eastern DRC. The UN peacekeeping in DRC (MONUSCO) also provided in-kind logistical support to this project.



Pastoralism

Pastoral communities are often the most at risk in armed conflicts, as well as from climate change. There are often localized conflicts between agricultural and pastoral communities. The photos featured here illustrate pastoral life and challenges from Sudan.

To build peace, UNEP provides training and technical expertise to build capacity of pastoral communities and others to govern and manage their resources effectively, equitably, and sustainably. A key element of this work is training on peaceful resolution of disputes.

Opposite (from top):

1. Dinka Tribe – Sudan (2006)

Before South Sudan became independent, Sudan comprised hundreds of ethnic and tribal divisions and language groups, with two major distinct cultures: Arab and Black African. The Dinka is among the largest of the many Black African Tribes with an estimated population of over one million.

2. Nomad Camp in the Desert – Sudan (2006)

A Beja nomad village in Kassala state. Climate change and desertification threaten livelihoods of millions of Sudanese living on the edge of the dry Sahel belt.

3. Pastoralism – Sudan (2006)

Camels are a major means of transportation and source of wealth.

4. Dead Livestock, North Darfur – Sudan (2014)

© Albert Gonzalez Farran



Forests

Forests provide livelihoods, sources of food and clean water, and high-value timber, as well as non-timber forest products. They regulate rainfall and are an important carbon sink. Yet 12 million hectares of forest are destroyed annually. Deforestation in places like Afghanistan, Sudan, and DR Congo is largely due to the timber and charcoal trade within these regions.

UNEP helps countries and communities sustainably manage forests for people and the planet.

Opposite (from top):

1. Charcoal Trade – DRC (2008)

A thriving charcoal market inside the Virunga National Park, home of the endangered mountain gorilla, reportedly supplies up to 80 percent of Goma's charcoal consumption.

2. Charcoal Transport – DRC (2010)

Every day throughout the DRC, thousands of bicycles carrying charcoal loads of 200-250 kilograms each stream into urban centers to supply the burgeoning energy demand.

3. Piles of Timber – Sudan (2006)

Timber trade is an important income generating activity in Sudan, especially among people who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the conflict. The large scale at which timber is cut and sold, and the lack in regulation, have led to severe deforestation.

4. Deforestation – Afghanistan (2012)

© Anssi Kullberg





The Aftermath of Airstrikes in Syria (2018)

© Mouneb Taim

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A Street in Douma following an airstrike. The SOHR put the death toll at 28, though other estimates were higher.

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www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org