

РОЗДІЛ 4. ПОЛІТИЧНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ МІЖНАРОДНИХ СИСТЕМ ТА ГЛОБАЛЬНОГО РОЗВИТКУ

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Threats and provocations posed by Armenia to the ecological security of the South Caucasus: in the context of international relations

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The aim of this article is to reveal the threats and dangers that Armenia poses to the environmental security of the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. It is noted that in order to ensure the sovereign integrity and sustainable national security of the South Caucasus states, it is essential to align their strategies with broader environmental processes. Since environmental sustainability should be considered the cornerstone of sovereignty. It is emphasized that Armenia's attitude to nature and natural resources has increased and reached its apogee in the 21st century. The state policy of Armenia is based on acts of aggression, such as pollution of the Araks River, destruction of mineral springs belonging to the Republic of Azerbaijan, plundering of forests, illegal exploitation of mineral resources. Methodology and methods. When writing the article, the methods of identifying facts related to the event and process, analyzing and dissecting facts, analyzing and synthesizing were used. The novelty of the article lies in the first disclosure of the environmental disaster inflicted by Armenia on the countries of the South Caucasus. For this purpose, periodicals were distributed and the facts contained in them were presented. At the same time, information is provided on the scale of the blow that the Armenian side inflicted on the nature and freshwater basins of the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan over many years. Main result: Summing up, it is noted that throughout the world, humanity is already facing the negative consequences of global warming. Since, strong anthropogenic exploitation of nature has led to a reduction in water resources, an increase in temperature and an increase in environmental risks. It is emphasized that although the countries of the world are taking significant measures in this direction, we are witnessing that the negative trends of climate change are increasing every year. In this sense, Armenia's ecocidal activities are a crime not only against the region, but also against the environment of the entire world. There are facts that Armenia has deliberately and purposefully created an ecological disaster zone in the region. Not long ago, during the occupation, the Karabakh region was a gray zone of the South Caucasus.

Key words: green energy, hydro resources, clean ecology, human rights, energy security.

Introduction. One of the global problems that concern the world today is climate change. Environmental issues related to ecological security have become the object of discussion, with the idea that climate change can threaten security. Thus, during the 20 years since the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), humanity has achieved very little in the direction of stabilizing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Armenia's ecocide activity in the region has become widespread. In particular, during the occupation, the water resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan became the object of Armenia's hydro-terrorism and hydro-sabotage, and the crisis in transboundary rivers continues today. During the last 30 years, Armenia has been carrying out an active armed terrorist war against Azerbaijan using various methods. This terrorist policy carried out by Armenia was of an ideological, scientific, cultural, spiritual, and social nature and rose to the level of transnational

terrorism. The once-flourishing city of Aghdam has been destroyed in such a way that even international media representatives call it the «Hiroshima of the Caucasus».

The aim of this article is to reveal the threats and dangers that Armenia poses to the environmental security of the South Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. It is noted that in order to ensure the sovereign integrity and sustainable national security of the South Caucasus states, it is essential to align their strategies with broader environmental processes. Since environmental sustainability should be considered the cornerstone of sovereignty.

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Main text. Armenia depends on imported hydrocarbons, including transportation fuel, and gas for residential and industrial purposes, as well as a third of its electricity production. Armenia's energy system primarily depends on natural gas, nuclear, and hydroelectric power. In particular, its energy supply is dominated by natural gas, almost all of which is imported from Russia. Natural gas is the largest contributor to total energy supply (TES) as well as the main energy carrier in total final consumption (TFC). Domestic energy production comes mainly from Armenia's Soviet-era nuclear power plant (Armenia Atomic Power Station [ANPP]) and hydroelectricity. Since Armenia does not produce fossil fuels, all-natural gas and oil products used in the country are imported.

Regional environmental crisis caused by Armenia

Armenia, landlocked in the South Caucasus, is a middle-income country with low human development. The country's sustainable development is still affected by gender inequality, rural poverty, overexploitation of natural capital, and dependence on imported hydrocarbons. Geographical features combined with climate change factors make the country one of the most prone to natural hazards in the region, where more than 80 percent of the population is exposed.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Armenia's economy, which experienced a long-term crisis, began to partially transform from a centralized structure left over from the Soviet era to a market-oriented economy. Thus, after the transition to the parliamentary system in 2016, the level of poverty in Armenia, where a high level of instability was observed, is higher than 30% [6].

In the South Caucasus region, Armenia ranks second after Georgia in terms of water resources. 3,000 m³ of waterfalls per person per year in the country (approximately 3.5 times more than the average annual indicator for Azerbaijan). The population of Armenia uses 66% of its water for irrigation purposes, 30% for household purposes, and only 4% for industry. However, as a result of the current economic crisis in Armenia for more than 10 years, as well as the continuous use of the Metsamor NPP, which operates due to the large amount of water of the Aras River, and the complete suspension of the operation of 19 water treatment plants in the country, water consumption has decreased from 220 million m³ to 50 million m³ has descended [2, p. 327].

American researchers Y. Winston, Rita E. Cesti, and Ju Yung Lee co-authored the research work «Towards Integrated Water Resources Management in Armenia» in which Armenia's total water resources are approximately 9.169 billion m³, surface water resources are 4.8 billion m³, and underground water resources are 4 billion m³. It is noted that it is 3 billion m³ and that the drinking water needs of the population

of Armenia are met at the expense of internal waters [3]. However, against the background of these investigated facts, Armenia kept the water resources, which make up 25% of Azerbaijan's water environment, under occupation for 30 years and has biasedly and purposefully facilitated the expansion of the hydrocrisis situation in the region [13, p. 36].

Armenia is the country with the biggest share of pollution in the Araxes. 74% of its area is located around the Aras River basin, and 24% is directly connected to the Kura basin. Even the ecological danger in the Aras River is more evident than in the Kura River. 8 million people live on the banks of this river basin. The tributaries of the Araz River starting from Gyumri are continuously polluted by domestic and industrial wastes from many industrial cities of Armenia [13, p. 36–41].

Also, 4 of the 13 rivers flowing through the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan are formed in the territory of Armenia. Kondalanchay, Hekarichay, Okchuchay, Bazarchay, Khonashenchay, Basitchay, Gargarchay, Tartarchay and Khachinchay, which take their source from the territory of Armenia, belong to the upper reaches of the Aras River, and the level of water pollution has increased through these rivers. Among them, the most polluted river is Okchuchay (the 46-km section falls on the territory of Armenia), followed by Kadarchay, Bargushad, and Arpachay. The very low level of oxygen in these rivers has reduced the acidity index in river water to pH 2.4 (the norm of acidity index in water is pH 7.5–8.5). At the same time, the microflora decreased by 180–200 times, and the vegetation on the river banks was destroyed [13, p. 36–41].

In connection with this problem, on November 1, 2007, in the Armenian press, the applications of several non-governmental organizations of both Georgia and Armenia expressing their legitimate dissatisfaction with the official bodies regarding the discharge of toxic substances from the Teghut mine into the transboundary Debed River, as well as the 2019 [9]. At the meeting of the Iran-Armenia Joint Working Group held in Tabriz in November of 2018, the protests and warnings of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the further pollution of Aras by Armenia on the border with Iran did not come true as a result [8]. The representative of the UN Human Rights Council, Hilal Elver, who recorded such cases of hydro crisis in the transboundary rivers of the region during his visit to Azerbaijan and Armenia, in his report submitted to the Council on this issue, emphasized that Armenia pollutes the transboundary rivers flowing into Azerbaijan and that such a situation causes great complications in the work of farmers in Azerbaijan [4].

Despite the signing of an agreement between Armenia and Georgia on joint cooperation on environmental protection and natural resources protection on May 3, 1997 (the Armenian government ratified this document on November 30, 1999),

these documents have not been applied in practice. Thus, in 2015, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Armenia revealed some law violations and shortcomings related to the company's activities regarding the damage caused by the Akhtala company to the environment [10, p. 88].

Unfortunately, during the 30-year occupation period, some Western countries justified Armenia's activities against international law, and no sanctions were imposed on the Armenian government by international institutions, as a result, Armenia succeeded in carrying out its barbaric and provocative activities for many years.

In the ecology of the South Caucasus, the ecology of Lake Urmia is of great importance for the safety of the region's population. The Urmia problem is directly related to the crisis created by Iran and Armenia in the region. Iran has sometimes supported Armenia in this field, and sometimes stopped cooperation, calling it an unreliable partner.

The relevant UN conventions on hydro security provide that all projects and plans that will take place in transboundary rivers can be realized only based on the principle of respect for the interests and needs of the coastal states. Analyzing the problem from the aspect of international law, as well as regional agreements, the result is that the Araz River is not only within the sovereign territory of Iran, and the joint use of this river can be carried out under conditions of mutual agreement with the regional states. However, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the state of Türkiye have not given official permission to Iran for any project related to the Aras River.

2. Environmental activities of Armenia against international law

Analyzing Armenia's environmental policy from the perspective of international legislative norms is a very important issue. Because in modern times, international environmental law plays a decisive role in protecting environmental security.

The documents of the International Law Commission of the UN mention the legal behaviour of the occupying state during the war. In the documents, it is emphasized that the occupying state must respect and protect the environment of the occupied territory by international law, take into account environmental considerations in the management of this territory, and take appropriate measures to prevent significant damage to the environment of the occupied territory, the health and well-being of the population of the occupied territory.

In several international legal acts, there are some norms related to the protection of the ecosystem in times of war and the protection of the rights of the civilian population. The Hague Convention of 1907 «On the Laws and Customs of War on Land» [12], the Geneva Convention of 1949 «On

the Protection of Victims of War» and Additional Protocols I and II to this convention (1977 and 2005), «Environmental Modification Means» examples include the 1976 Convention on the Prohibition of Their Use for Military or Any Other Hostile Purposes, and the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be extremely injurious or have indiscriminate effects [11, p. 69].

According to the 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Rules of War, if one of the warring parties targets the territory of an enemy state, and destroys its civil infrastructure facilities, this situation is considered a deliberate violation of the rules and norms of humanitarian law. The acts of occupation and hydro sabotage carried out by Armenia in the territories belonging to the Republic of Azerbaijan are completely contrary to the provisions of this convention. For 30 years, Armenia has carried out ecocide activities in the occupied Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The information given by local and foreign press agencies, which observe such illegal actions of Armenia, and international organizations visiting the region confirms that Armenia has not refrained from provocative acts, disregarding the provisions of the Hague Convention, as well as agreements that provide for other humanitarian norms and principles [1, p. 25].

In the past two years, the fact that Armenia has been looting the environment and polluting transboundary rivers in the Karabakh region, even under the control of the Russian peacekeeping contingent, has become a continuous phenomenon, and as a result of the weakening of the activities of the European Union's civilian mission and the failure of the Russian peacekeeping mission to take any practical measures related to this issue, the state of Azerbaijan is concerned with the problem. On January 15, 2023, based on the collected documents, it rightly applied to the arbitration court under the Berne Convention. It should also be noted that this arbitration process is considered the first interstate arbitration in history [5].

In February 2024, 49 NGOs and eco-activists representing 22 countries showed solidarity by voting for the non-governmental organizations of Azerbaijan and Armenia. They issued a statement that the activities carried out in Armenia's mining industry in violation of international environmental norms and standards are disrupting the ecosystem of the world. Their goodwill statement calls for environmental justice for the South Caucasus region. The statement states: «*We, the civil society organizations and activists of the undersigned foreign countries, express our deep concern about the serious damage caused to the environment by the works carried out in violation of international environmental norms and standards in the mining*

industry of the Republic of Armenia. Although air and water pollution in Armenia's mining industry was once local, its consequences have become a serious threat not only to the South Caucasus but to the whole world. Armenia's mining industry continues to pollute transboundary rivers and cause some environmental problems in a wide geography from Eastern Europe to Central Asia» [7].

Conclusion. Researches show that Armenia's ecocide activity is not only a crime against the region, but against the natural environment. Armenia deliberately and purposefully created an ecological disaster zone in the region. The Karabakh region became the gray zone of the South Caucasus during the occupation. The region was a place where Armenia and its «allies» illegally exploited natural resources, and buried radioactive substances and waste. During the years of occupation, Armenia spoiled and mercilessly exploited the natural environment with acts of vandalism. Cities and villages inhabited by up to a million people were completely wiped out and destroyed.

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Загрози та провокації екологічної безпеки Південного Кавказу з боку Вірменії: контекст міжнародних відносин

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Метою даної статті є виявлення загроз і небезпек, які становить Вірменія для екологічної безпеки Південного Кавказу, в тому числі Азербайджану. Зазначається, що для забезпечення суверенної цілісності та сталої національної безпеки держав Південного Кавказу важливо узгодити їхні стратегії з більш широкими екологічними процесами. Оскільки екологічна стійкість повинна вважатися наріжним каменем суверенітету.

Підкреслюється, що ставлення Вірменії до природи і природних ресурсів зросло і досягло свого апогею в 21 столітті. Державна політика Вірменії базується на таких актах агресії, як забруднення річки Аракс, знищення мінеральних джерел, що належать Азербайджанській Республіці, розграбування лісів, незаконна експлуатація мінеральних ресурсів.

Методологія та методи. При написанні статті використовувалися методи виявлення фактів, що стосуються події та процесу, аналізу та розбору фактів, аналізу та синтезу.

Новизна статті полягає в першому розкритті екологічної катастрофи, завданої Вірменією країнам Південного Кавказу. З цією метою розповсюджувалися періодичні видання та викладалися в них факти. Водночас наводиться інформація про

масштаби удару, який вірменська сторона завдала протягом багатьох років природі та прісноводним басейнам Карабахського регіону Азербайджану.

Висновки. Підсумовуюючи, зазначається, що в усьому світі людство вже стикається з негативними наслідками глобального потепління. Оскільки сильна антропогенна експлуатація природи призвела до скорочення водних ресурсів, підвищення температури та зростання екологічних ризиків. Наголошується, що хоча країни світу вживають значних заходів у цьому напрямку, ми є свідками того, що негативні тенденції зміни клімату з кожним роком посилюються.

У цьому сенсі екоцидна діяльність Вірменії є злочином не тільки проти регіону, але й проти довкілля всього світу. Є факти, що Вірменія свідомо і цілеспрямовано створила в регіоні зону екологічного лиха. Не так давно, під час окупації, Карабах був сірою зоною Південного Кавказу.

Ключові слова: зелена енергетика, гідроресурси, чиста екологія, права людини, енергетична безпека.