

11 April 2025

In response to the letter DESA-25/00535 by the Under-Secretary-General LI Junhua on 21 March 2025, the Global Alliance to Spare Water from Armed Conflict sends its contribution on the themes of the Interactive Dialogues for the 2026 UN Water Conference.

The Global Alliance is a cross-regional group of countries and organizations, representing Slovenia, Switzerland, Costa Rica, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Mozambique, the Philippines, Panama, Senegal, Geneva Water Hub, Geneva Call, PAX and, as observer, UNICEF. The Alliance aims to foster collective action to enhance the protection of water during armed conflicts through good practices, knowledge production, advocacy and partnerships.

With 120 active armed conflicts across the globe¹, water is under attack and the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation denied to millions of civilians. Children in armed conflicts are 20 times more likely to die of water-borne diseases than bullets.² The consequences of damaged or destroyed water infrastructure can set back decades of developmental gains and have long-lasting detrimental consequences to the health of humans and the environment.

The members of the Global Alliance propose including the topics of survival and resilient WASH in an interactive dialogue dedicated to "Water for Health, access to WASH incl. human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation". The aim is to raise awareness about the urgent need to ensure immediate access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene services during emergencies to save lives, and to explore strategies for addressing these challenges – such as enhancing the resilience of WASH during peacetime and promoting international cooperation and capacity building in this regard.

LI Junhua

Under-Secretary-General

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

¹ ICRC. IRR No. 927. 'International humanitarian law and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts'. 2025.

² UNICEF, 'Water Under Fire [Volume 3] - Attacks on water and sanitation services in armed conflict and the impacts on children', 2021.