

War, Soil, and Freshwater Systems - 2026  
Pollution and Diseases Conference 2026  
Prague, Czech Republic | 15-17 October 2026

<https://pdconference.org/>

# Ethiopia-Eritrea War

---

*Prepared as a neutral reference text for conference participants*

*Last reviewed: 5 June 2026*

## **Purpose of the note**

This background note provides a concise but systematic overview of the Ethiopia-Eritrea War for conference participants. It is intended as a factual orientation text, not as a political position paper. The aim is to establish a shared analytical context: when the war began, who the principal parties were, why the conflict escalated, which border regions were most affected, and why the war matters for discussions of soils, freshwater systems, public health, displacement and long-term recovery.

The note focuses on the interstate war fought mainly from May 1998 to June 2000. It also includes the post-war settlement and the long "no war, no peace" period because these shaped displacement, militarization, mine contamination, border access and regional relations. Later developments, including the 2018 rapprochement, the 2020-2022 war in northern Ethiopia and renewed Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions in the mid-2020s, are mentioned only as context. They should not be confused with the 1998-2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea War itself.

For conference purposes, the most useful approach is to separate three questions. The first is the legal and diplomatic dispute over the border. The second is the military escalation that transformed a local border dispute into a high-casualty interstate war. The third is the practical impact of the war on border communities, rural livelihoods, land safety, water access, health systems and the long-term ability of displaced people to return.

## **When the war began**

The war began in May 1998 after armed incidents around Badme, a small settlement in a dry borderland area claimed or administered in different ways by the two states. Some chronologies use 6 May 1998, when local clashes occurred, as the starting date. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission later treated the period from 6 to 12 May as a series of geographically limited clashes along a remote, unmarked and disputed border, and identified 12 May 1998 as the date on which Eritrean regular forces launched a larger attack in the Badme area.

The broader background was Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The two governments had initially cooperated after Eritrean independence, but several important questions remained only partially resolved: the exact location of the colonial treaty border, customs and trade arrangements, currency and port access, the status of people with ties to both countries, and the security relationship between two former allied liberation movements that had become neighboring states.

The legal record is complicated and should be presented carefully. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission later delimited the international boundary on the basis of colonial treaties and applicable international law. Separately, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission found that Eritrea violated the prohibition on the use of force by attacking and occupying Badme and other areas that

were then under peaceful Ethiopian administration. These findings answer different questions: the final location of the boundary and the legality of the initial resort to force.

The fighting escalated quickly from local clashes into a conventional interstate war involving large infantry formations, artillery, tanks, air strikes and trench systems. The war was fought mainly along the border rather than in national capitals, but its social and economic effects reached deep into both countries.

## **Main actors**

The two principal parties to the war were the State of Eritrea and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

- Eritrea was led by President Isaias Afwerki. Its armed forces had emerged from the Eritrean liberation struggle and retained a strong mobilization capacity. Eritrea presented its position as a defense of territorial rights and implementation of the colonial treaty boundary. During the war, Eritrean forces fought on western, central and eastern fronts along the border.
- Ethiopia was led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. The Ethiopian National Defence Force and allied regional security structures became the main military actors on the Ethiopian side. Ethiopia presented its position as a response to Eritrean use of force and occupation of territory under Ethiopian administration. The war was fought partly in the northern Ethiopian region of Tigray, but it should not be reduced to a conflict between ethnic communities.
- International and regional actors included the Organization of African Unity, Algeria, the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Permanent Court of Arbitration as registry for the commissions, the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian agencies, and states involved in mediation or diplomatic support.
- The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission and the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission were not combatants. They were post-war arbitration bodies created by the Algiers Agreement. Their work is central for neutral discussion because it provides formal legal findings separate from wartime propaganda or national narratives.

## **The central problem**

At its core, the war was an interstate border conflict between two newly separated states. Badme was the most visible flashpoint, but the dispute was broader than one village. It concerned the location and administration of the border, the authority to police and tax border areas, the meaning of colonial-era treaties, and the practical problem of converting an internal Ethiopian administrative boundary into an international border after Eritrean independence.

The dispute also involved issues that were not purely cartographic. Eritrea's independence made Ethiopia landlocked, changing the economics of port access and trade. Currency changes, customs rules, trade disagreements and security concerns worsened relations before the war. Communities with family, economic and identity ties across the new border became vulnerable once the conflict turned into a national security crisis.

The war therefore should not be explained only as a dispute over a barren village, even though Badme was the immediate symbol. It was also a conflict over sovereignty, recognition, state authority, post-independence borders, national security and the political meaning of separation after decades of war inside Ethiopia.

A neutral conference formulation should avoid two simplifications. It should not say that the war was caused only by personal rivalry between leaders. It should also not say that the final boundary award alone explains the legality of the fighting. The boundary question and the use-of-force question are related but distinct.

## Geographic development of the war

The war was fought along several sectors of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. These areas include dry lowlands, highland escarpments, seasonal rivers, rural settlements, grazing areas and agricultural zones. The geography mattered because many affected communities depended on land access, seasonal movement, local markets, shallow wells, river crossings and rural roads.

- The western front included Badme, the Tahtay Adiabo and Laelay Adiabo areas on the Ethiopian side, and adjacent areas in western Eritrea. This was the first and most symbolic front of the war and the sector most closely associated with the legal disputes over Badme.
- The central front included areas around Zalambessa, Tserona/Tserona and the Mereb/Mareb River corridor. Fighting there affected highland communities, roads, villages, cultivation zones and cross-border movement.
- The eastern front included the Bure area and the corridor toward Assab and the Red Sea. This sector mattered because of strategic routes, Afar areas, transport geography and the wider question of access to ports and trade routes.

The front lines did not remain static, but the war did not become a nationwide occupation war in the manner of some later conflicts. Its direct battlefield geography was concentrated along the border, while its indirect effects - mobilization, displacement, expulsions, economic pressure and family separation - spread much more widely.

The military geography was marked by defensive lines, trenches, artillery positions, minefields and repeated assaults in difficult terrain. These features are important for environmental and public-health analysis because they left behind damaged soils, explosive remnants of war, restricted land use, abandoned settlements, contaminated scrap and long-term risks for farmers, herders, road workers and returning civilians.

## Short chronology

- 1993 - Eritrea becomes independent after a referendum. Ethiopia recognizes Eritrean independence, but detailed border, nationality, customs and economic issues remain incompletely resolved.
- 1997-early 1998 - Border incidents, administrative disagreements and local tensions increase in areas including Badme. Committees and consultations take place, but the border is still not physically demarcated.
- 6-12 May 1998 - Armed incidents occur around Badme. Accounts differ on precise locations and responsibility for the first local clashes. The Claims Commission later described the early incidents as limited border encounters and found that they did not amount to an armed attack justifying large-scale self-defense.
- 12 May 1998 - Eritrean regular forces attack Badme and other nearby areas. The Claims Commission later found this use of force unlawful under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.
- June 1998 - The conflict escalates rapidly, including air strikes, mobilization and fighting along multiple fronts. The UN Security Council condemns the outbreak of war and calls for a ceasefire and peaceful settlement.
- 1999 - Major fighting resumes after periods of relative calm. Ethiopia recaptures Badme and gains positions in some areas, while both sides suffer heavy losses. Trench warfare and artillery become prominent features of the conflict.
- May-June 2000 - A major Ethiopian offensive changes the military situation. Eritrea accepts a ceasefire framework and large-scale fighting ends with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities on 18 June 2000.

- 31 July and 15 September 2000 - The United Nations establishes and then expands the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea to monitor the ceasefire, redeployments and the Temporary Security Zone, and to assist mine action.
- 12 December 2000 - Ethiopia and Eritrea sign the Algiers Agreement, terminating military hostilities and establishing the Boundary Commission and Claims Commission.
- 13 April 2002 - The Boundary Commission issues its delimitation decision. Both states initially accept the decision, but demarcation later stalls, especially in central and western sectors.
- 2002-2018 - A prolonged "no war, no peace" period follows. Large-scale interstate war does not resume, but the border remains militarized, diplomatic relations are limited, movement is restricted and demarcation remains politically contested.
- 2018 - Ethiopia and Eritrea announce a rapprochement and begin to normalize relations. The breakthrough is linked to Ethiopia's acceptance of the 2002 boundary ruling and to political decisions by the leaders of both states.
- 2020s - Relations are affected by the war in northern Ethiopia and by renewed regional tensions. These developments are important for current risk assessment but should be analytically distinguished from the 1998-2000 war.

## Regions and populations most affected

The most directly affected areas were border communities in Eritrea and northern Ethiopia, especially in the western, central and eastern sectors of the frontier. Rural civilians were affected by shelling, displacement, loss of livestock, disruption of planting and harvesting, destroyed homes, closed roads, and the danger of mines and unexploded ordnance.

In Ethiopia, the northern region of Tigray was one of the main border theatres. Communities near Badme, Zalambessa and other front-line areas experienced displacement, military occupation or contestation, destruction and long-term insecurity. In Eritrea, areas of Gash-Barka, Debub/Southern region and Southern Red Sea zones were affected by fighting, displacement and militarized land use.

The war also affected people far from the front. Ethiopians of Eritrean origin living in Addis Ababa and other Ethiopian cities, and Ethiopians living in Eritrea, became vulnerable to detention, expulsion, property loss, family separation and unresolved nationality status. This civilian dimension is central to understanding the war, because many of its long-term consequences were produced not only by battlefield violence but also by state policies toward people associated with the other country.

## Humanitarian consequences

The war produced heavy military casualties and severe civilian suffering. Exact casualty figures differ by source and should be treated with caution. A common neutral formulation is that tens of thousands of people were killed, with many estimates reaching around 70,000 to 100,000 deaths, most of them soldiers. Some figures are higher, but the quality of wartime data is uneven.

Displacement was a central consequence. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were internally displaced in both countries. Many communities fled front-line villages or were moved as the fighting shifted. Some people were displaced more than once, first by combat and later by insecurity, landmines, destroyed livelihoods or restricted return.

The war also generated large cross-border and regional population movements. Human Rights Watch reported over one million refugees during the course of the war and documented mass expulsions and deportations from both countries. Ethiopia expelled about 75,000 people of Eritrean origin, while Eritrea forcibly expelled or participated in the repatriation of about 70,000 Ethiopians. Numbers and categories vary, but the pattern is clear: nationality and origin became major sources of civilian vulnerability.

The economic effects were severe. Both states diverted scarce resources to war, mobilized large numbers of young people, disrupted trade and transport, and damaged agricultural and urban livelihoods. Families lost income earners, assets, livestock, land access and property. The war deepened poverty and reduced the capacity of both states to invest in health, water systems, education and rural recovery.

## **Civilian protection, law and mass expulsions**

The war generated extensive legal and human rights concerns. The Claims Commission heard claims concerning prisoners of war, civilian treatment, diplomatic issues, property, economic losses and conduct of military operations. It delivered multiple partial and final awards, making the war one of the most legally documented interstate conflicts in Africa.

For neutral use, it is important to distinguish between legal findings and political rhetoric. The Claims Commission made a formal finding that Eritrea violated Article 2(4) of the UN Charter by using armed force on 12 May 1998 and the immediately following days to attack and occupy Badme and other areas under peaceful Ethiopian administration. At the same time, it found that Ethiopia's contention that later Eritrean attacks along other parts of the common border were pre-planned and coordinated unlawful uses of force failed for lack of proof.

Human rights organizations documented serious abuses connected with mass expulsions, arbitrary detention, mistreatment, separation of families, confiscation of documents and property loss. These issues are especially relevant for conference discussions because they show how a border war can transform identity documents, nationality status, property records and family ties into mechanisms of harm.

The post-war Claims Commission process provided a formal channel for compensation claims between governments, but it did not by itself resolve all human consequences of expulsion, denationalization, family separation or loss of livelihood. Many affected individuals experienced the war as a loss of home, citizenship security, documentation and social belonging, not only as exposure to combat.

## **Regional and international dimensions**

The war mattered beyond the two states because Eritrea and Ethiopia occupy a strategic position in the Horn of Africa and near the Red Sea. The conflict affected migration, refugee flows, regional diplomacy, port access, trade routes, military alliances and the security calculations of neighboring states.

The Organization of African Unity played a major mediation role, with support from other international actors. The Algiers Agreement created a structured post-war process: cessation of hostilities, peacekeeping, border delimitation and claims arbitration. This architecture was unusually legalistic, but it did not guarantee rapid political implementation.

The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea monitored the ceasefire and the Temporary Security Zone and supported mine action. Its role reflected the international concern that a renewed war could destabilize the wider Horn of Africa. However, the mission operated within limits set by the parties, access restrictions, political mistrust and the unresolved boundary-demarkation process.

The 2018 rapprochement briefly changed the regional atmosphere. Borders reopened for a time, flights resumed, families reunited and diplomatic relations improved. Yet the later deterioration of relations shows that a legal settlement and a leadership-level peace declaration do not automatically produce durable institutional reconciliation, open borders or demilitarized social relations.

## **Why peace efforts only partly resolved the conflict**

The Algiers Agreement stopped the large-scale interstate war and created mechanisms for delimitation, demarcation and claims. In that sense it was highly significant. However, the agreement did not resolve all political and social problems between the two states.

First, the boundary decision was final and binding, but physical demarcation stalled. Ethiopia objected to parts of the delimitation decision and demarcation became politically difficult, especially where local communities and symbolic locations were affected. Eritrea insisted on implementation without renegotiation. The result was a prolonged impasse.

Second, the agreement dealt with state-to-state claims more effectively than with people-to-people reconciliation. It did not fully repair the effects of deportation, family separation, property loss, nationality insecurity or years of closed border life.

Third, the militarization of the border became a durable fact. Even without renewed full-scale war, communities near the frontier continued to live with restricted mobility, limited trade, mine danger, conscription pressures, surveillance and uncertainty.

Fourth, the states did not build robust institutions for regular cross-border cooperation. A durable settlement would have required not only a boundary line, but also local security arrangements, border trade rules, documentation procedures, land access mechanisms, mine clearance, restitution or compensation processes, and channels for resolving future incidents before they escalated.

## **Soil, freshwater and public health relevance**

The environmental and public-health record of the Ethiopia-Eritrea War is less systematically documented than the legal and displacement record. This means that conference discussion should avoid unsupported claims of specific chemical contamination levels unless they are based on verified local studies. However, the war is still highly relevant to soil, freshwater and disease discussions because its battlefield geography was rural, arid or semi-arid, and dependent on fragile land and water systems.

The war affected soils through trench construction, shelling, artillery craters, damaged vehicles, fuel residues, scrap metal, military waste, abandoned fortifications, erosion around defensive positions, and the presence of mines and unexploded ordnance. The main long-term problem is not only chemical pollution. It is also land denial: fields, grazing areas, roads and settlement sites may become too dangerous or inaccessible to use safely.

Freshwater impacts were connected to displacement, destruction or neglect of rural water points, damaged local infrastructure, disrupted maintenance, blocked access to wells or seasonal water sources, sanitation pressure in displaced settlements, and the concentration of people and livestock in areas not designed to absorb them. In arid borderlands, even modest disruption to wells, pumps, canals, river crossings or seasonal grazing routes can have large consequences for public health and livelihoods.

Public-health effects included trauma injuries, amputations and disability from mines and unexploded ordnance; disruption of vaccination, maternal care and basic health services; malnutrition risks linked to displacement and loss of livelihoods; communicable disease risks in crowded or poorly serviced displaced-person settings; and long-term mental-health consequences from combat exposure, forced displacement and family separation.

For research purposes, the war is a reminder that environmental damage does not always appear as a single spectacular industrial disaster. In rural border wars, the relevant damage may be distributed across small water systems, grazing routes, soils, fields, mine-contaminated areas, abandoned homes, disrupted markets and weakened health services.

## Why the war matters for academic discussion

For academic and conference purposes, the Ethiopia-Eritrea War is important because it shows how an interstate war over a border can produce long-term environmental, demographic and public-health consequences even when the main combat zone is geographically limited. It is relevant to the study of:

- border ambiguity, state formation and violence after secession;
- the difference between legal delimitation, physical demarcation and lived border access;
- trench warfare, mine contamination and land-use restriction in rural landscapes;
- the relationship between arid borderland ecology, water access and civilian vulnerability;
- mass displacement, expulsions, nationality insecurity and documentation loss;
- the public-health burden of militarization, displacement and long-term restricted mobility;
- the limits of ceasefire monitoring when political implementation stalls;
- the role of arbitration and international law in post-war settlement;
- data limitations in studying older conflicts where environmental monitoring was incomplete;
- how a legally ended war can leave unresolved social, environmental and security effects.

The war should therefore not be described only as a border dispute or as a brief military confrontation. It was a high-casualty interstate war with legal, humanitarian, demographic, environmental, economic and regional dimensions.

## Neutral formulation for use in presentations

The Ethiopia-Eritrea War was a major interstate armed conflict fought mainly along the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea from May 1998 to June 2000. It emerged from disputes over the location and administration of the newly internationalized border, especially around Badme, against the background of Eritrea's 1993 independence and unresolved questions of territory, trade, security, port access and nationality.

Large-scale fighting ended with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000 and the Algiers Agreement of 12 December 2000. The Algiers Agreement created a Boundary Commission and a Claims Commission. The Boundary Commission issued its delimitation decision in April 2002, but demarcation and political implementation remained contested for years, producing a long "no war, no peace" period until the 2018 rapprochement.

For this conference, the conflict is most usefully discussed as an interstate border war with major humanitarian, environmental and public-health consequences: heavy casualties, mass displacement, expulsions and nationality issues, mine contamination, restricted land use, disrupted rural livelihoods, pressure on water access and long-term effects on border communities. The goal is not to reproduce the political narratives of either government, but to understand how war reshapes land, water, health and social systems.

## Key terms

- **Badme** - Small settlement and surrounding area that became the symbolic flashpoint of the war. The Boundary Commission later delimited the boundary in a way that placed Badme on the Eritrean side, while the Claims Commission found that Eritrea unlawfully used force in May 1998 to attack and occupy Badme, then under peaceful Ethiopian administration.
- **Algiers Agreement** - Agreement signed on 12 December 2000 by Ethiopia and Eritrea. It terminated military hostilities and established the Boundary Commission and Claims Commission.
- **Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities** - Agreement signed on 18 June 2000 that ended large-scale fighting and created arrangements for redeployment and a Temporary Security Zone.

- Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission - Arbitration body established to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border based on the 1900, 1902 and 1908 treaties and applicable international law.
- Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission - Arbitration body established to decide state-to-state claims for loss, damage or injury related to the conflict and violations of international humanitarian law or other international law.
- UNMEE - United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, established in 2000 to monitor the ceasefire, redeployments and the Temporary Security Zone, and to assist mine action.
- Temporary Security Zone - Demilitarized zone created under the ceasefire arrangements, mainly on the Eritrean side of the border, monitored by UNMEE.
- No war, no peace - Common expression for the post-2000 period in which large-scale war had ended but the border remained militarized and political relations remained largely frozen.
- Zalambessa - Border town and central-front area heavily affected by the war and later by closed-border conditions.
- Bure - Eastern-front area near the route toward Assab and the Red Sea, important for strategic geography and transport access.
- Mereb/Mareb River - River corridor in the central border area; river systems and crossings were important for geography, livelihoods and military movement.
- Explosive remnants of war - Unexploded shells, mines, bombs and other explosive materials that remain after combat and restrict safe return, farming, grazing and road use.

## **Selected bibliography and sources for further orientation**

### **General background and chronology**

- Permanent Court of Arbitration. Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission case materials, including the 13 April 2002 delimitation decision and demarcation materials.
- Permanent Court of Arbitration. Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission case materials, including awards on prisoners of war, civilians, front-line claims, diplomatic claims, property and damages.
- Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission. Partial Award: Jus Ad Bellum, Ethiopia's Claims 1-8. The Hague, 19 December 2005.
- United Nations Security Council resolutions on Ethiopia and Eritrea, especially Resolution 1177 (1998), Resolution 1298 (2000), Resolution 1312 (2000), Resolution 1320 (2000) and later UNMEE mandate resolutions.
- Organization of African Unity / African Union materials on the Framework Agreement, Modalities for Implementation and Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

### **Humanitarian situation, displacement and civilian protection**

- Human Rights Watch. The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue. January 2003.
- International Committee of the Red Cross. Materials on prisoners of war, repatriation, civilian protection and tracing/family links during and after the war.
- United Nations humanitarian and refugee reporting from the 1998-2002 period, including materials on displacement, return and mine action.
- Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reports on arbitrary detention, deportations, civilian treatment and nationality issues.

### **Peacekeeping, border implementation and legal analysis**

- United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea materials, including Security Council reports and mission documents.

- International legal scholarship on the Algiers Agreement, the Boundary Commission and the Claims Commission.
- International Crisis Group, Chatham House, Rift Valley Institute and other regional analysis on the Horn of Africa, Eritrea-Ethiopia relations and the post-war border impasse.

### **Environment, soil, water and mine action**

- UNMEE Mine Action Coordination Centre materials, where available, and UN mine action reporting on the Temporary Security Zone and adjacent areas.
- Landmine Monitor / International Campaign to Ban Landmines country reports on Eritrea and Ethiopia.
- OCHA and ReliefWeb archives on displacement, returns, humanitarian access, mine contamination and affected border communities.
- Academic and NGO studies on arid borderland livelihoods, pastoralism, rural water systems, land degradation and post-conflict mine contamination in the Horn of Africa.

### **Current context and later developments**

- Nobel Prize Committee press release on the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, including reference to the 2018 Ethiopia-Eritrea peace initiative and acceptance of the 2002 boundary ruling.
- Reuters, Associated Press, BBC and other major international reporting on the 2018 rapprochement, the 2020-2022 war in northern Ethiopia and later Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions.

### **Minimum recommended reading set**

For a participant with limited time, the following sources are sufficient for a basic but reliable understanding of the war:

- Permanent Court of Arbitration overview of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission.
- Permanent Court of Arbitration overview of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission.
- Eritrea-Ethiopia Claims Commission, Partial Award: Jus Ad Bellum, Ethiopia's Claims 1-8.
- Human Rights Watch, The Horn of Africa War: Mass Expulsions and the Nationality Issue.
- UN Security Council Resolution 1320 (2000) and a short UNMEE background note.

For a participant preparing an academic paper or presentation, the following should be added:

- The full 13 April 2002 Boundary Commission decision and selected demarcation materials.
- Claims Commission awards on civilians, prisoners of war, Western/Central/Eastern Front claims and damages.
- Landmine Monitor country reports on Eritrea and Ethiopia for the years after the war.
- ICRC materials on prisoner repatriation, civilian repatriation and family links.
- Regional analysis from International Crisis Group, Chatham House or Rift Valley Institute on the Horn of Africa and the Eritrea-Ethiopia relationship after 2000.

### **Concluding summary**

The Ethiopia-Eritrea War began in May 1998 after local incidents around an unmarked and disputed border area escalated into a major interstate war. Its immediate flashpoint was Badme, but the conflict reflected wider problems created by Eritrea's independence, incomplete border demarcation, unresolved nationality and economic issues, and deteriorating relations between two newly separated states.

The war ended militarily in 2000, but its consequences lasted much longer. The Algiers Agreement created legal mechanisms for boundary delimitation and compensation claims, yet demarcation stalled and the border remained militarized for many years. Civilians experienced the war through

displacement, expulsions, documentation loss, restricted movement, loss of livelihoods, mine danger and weakened social and health systems.

For conference discussion, the most neutral and analytically useful framing is this: the Ethiopia-Eritrea War was an interstate border war whose consequences extended beyond battlefield deaths. It altered land use, water access, rural livelihoods, public health, family networks, nationality status and regional security. It remains a useful case for studying how unresolved borders and militarized landscapes can produce long-term environmental and humanitarian harm even after formal hostilities end.