

PD Conference 2026

Proposed Programme

Prague | 15–17 October 2026 | All times are Prague local time

Conference purpose and structure

The conference examines the long-term consequences of war for soil, freshwater systems, communities and post-war territories. Across three days, participants will compare evidence, examine gaps in current research and identify practical directions for investigation and cooperation.

Thursday asks what we actually know, combining opening contributions, a research-practice overview and soil and freshwater cases with an extended final discussion. Friday examines chemical contamination, war and memory, and post-war territorial transformation. Saturday brings together two thematic overviews and devotes the afternoon to implementation discussions and project development.

Sessions run sequentially in one room. Human Experience of War remains a distinct direction with its own methods. Each day begins and ends with the organisers, with introductions and synthesis throughout the programme.

Daily hours and breaks

Day	Hours	Lunch	Coffee breaks
Thursday	09:00–17:00	12:20–13:20	10:45–11:05; 14:50–15:10
Friday	09:00–17:00	12:30–13:30	10:20–10:40; 15:00–15:20
Saturday	09:30–15:00	11:45–12:45	10:30–11:00

The three days contain 28 individual presentation slots of 15 minutes and three thematic overviews of 20 minutes. The overviews collectively represent 23 contributions. Scheduled programme time totals 1,000 minutes; lunches and coffee breaks total 290 minutes.

Presentation and overview format

Individual presentations occupy 15-minute slots, including introduction and changeover. Questions are reserved for the scheduled discussions. Each thematic overview is a single 20-minute synthesis of the listed papers, with authors and titles credited; the papers are not delivered as separate talks within that slot. Full presentations are available as MP4 recordings.

Discussion should distinguish documented findings, hypotheses and unresolved questions. The final day aims to define a small number of initial work packages and follow-up actions, recording responsibilities and review points where these have been agreed.

Thursday 15 October

Day 1 — What Do We Actually Know?

09:00–17:00 | Prague local time

The opening day examines the evidence available on the long-term environmental consequences of war and the limitations of current research approaches. A substantial final discussion will bring the contributions together, identify unresolved questions and establish priorities for the following two days.

09:00–09:15 — Organisers' Opening Remarks

Introduction to the conference purpose, working method and expected outputs.

Opening Contributions

09:15–09:30 — Kenneth Ray Olson and Lois Wright Morton

Event-Ecosystem Dilemma.

09:30–09:45 — Rattan Lal

Soil Health and War.

09:45–10:00 — Vu Thi Phung, Vu Dinh Phong and Nguyen Van Ngoc

Archival Records on the Use of Chemical Agents during the Vietnam War at National Archives Center III: Value and Accessibility.

10:00–10:15 — Lois Wright Morton

Beyond Humanitarian Aid: Reclamation and Reconstruction of Contaminated Soil, Degraded Water Resources and Farmer Livelihoods from Wars and Conflicts.

10:15–10:30 — Muriel Bubbio

Beyond Reconstruction: Soft Power, Water and Community Resilience in Post-Conflict Countries.

10:30–10:45 — Laboratory of Military Ecotones

The Paradigm of the Military Ecotone: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for the Study of War-Related Environmental Pollution.

10:45–11:05 — Coffee Break

11:05–11:15 — Organisers' synthesis of the opening contributions

Overview 1 — Scientific Recognition, Research Practice and Long-Term Military Contamination

How Robust Is Research on the Environmental Consequences of War?

This session examines how research questions, evidence and competing explanations become recognised—or remain outside established scientific practice. Twelve contributions are brought together in a thematic overview, followed by discussion of the methodological and organisational conditions needed to investigate long-term military contamination.

11:15–11:20 — Organisers' introduction

11:20–11:40 — Thematic overview of twelve papers — 20 minutes

The following contributions are presented collectively in one overview.

Dmitry Nikolaenko

Why Were There No Papers on War-Affected Soil at a Conference on the Effects of War on Soil. Protocols of Expert-AI Scientific Inquiry.

Dmitry Nikolaenko

Verdun and the Somme After the Battles: Fragmented Expertise and the Morphology of Long Term Military Contamination.

Laboratory of Information Systems

How a Citation Error Became Certified Knowledge.

Laboratory of Information Systems

Building Research Infrastructure for Long-Term Studies of War: Project-Based Laboratories for Field Research, Information Systems, and Decision Support.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

Scientific Recognition Architecture: Operational Specification — Version 1.0.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

Central Place Theory After 1945 and the Production of Scientific Innocence.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

From the Formation of the Soviet Scientific System to the Involvement of Russian Academic Organizations in the War Against Ukraine.

Laboratory of Information Systems

The Right of a Theory to Empirical Testing: Organisational and Metascientific Constraints on the Study of Soil After War.

Laboratory of Information Systems

Political Taboo and the Failure to Recognize Long Term Military Contamination.

Rex Alexander and Samuel Mann

From Scientific Recognition to Critical Practice. Support for Military and Emergency Services Personnel in New Zealand.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

A New Type of War-Related Pollution: Fiber-Optic Drone Tether Debris and War-Derived Polymer Microfibers.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

Soil After War As a Configurational Object of the Military Ecotone.

11:40–12:20 — Discussion and organisers' synthesis

Participants will discuss the evidence required to test the proposed explanations, obstacles to empirical investigation and the research structures needed to address them. The organisers will identify questions to revisit during the afternoon's cross-case discussion.

12:20–13:20 — Lunch**Soil and Freshwater Systems After Military Activity**

This session examines hydrological change, land-use consequences, freshwater vulnerability and community responses across different geographical settings. The contributions provide concrete cases for comparing exposure pathways, environmental dependencies and priorities for investigation.

13:20–13:25 — Organisers' introduction**13:25–13:40 — Quillon Harpham**

Environmental Decision-Making Under Abrupt Transformation: Lessons from the Nova Kakhovka Dam Breach and Data-Driven Dengue Control.

13:40–13:55 — Ivan Katumba

Community Environmental Awareness and Freshwater Protection in Uganda: A Community-Based Perspective from the African Great Lakes Region.

13:55–14:10 — Anna Tymoshenko

From Protection to Dependency: Hydrological Lock-In, War, and the North Crimean Canal.

14:10–14:25 — Victorious Naggayi

Post-Conflict Soil Recovery and Food Security in Northern Uganda: Long-Term Land-Use Consequences of Armed Conflict in the Acholi Sub-Region.

14:25–14:40 — Shirat Nagitta

Industrial Runoff, Wetland Degradation, and Public Health Risk in the Lake Victoria Basin: Freshwater Vulnerability in a Conflict-Exposed Great Lakes Region.

14:40–14:50 — Organisers' synthesis

Principal findings and questions for the final discussion.

14:50–15:10 — Coffee Break

15:10–16:40 — General Discussion

Connecting the Cases and Defining the Research Questions

This extended discussion brings together the opening contributions, the thematic overview and the soil and freshwater cases. Participants will have time to examine disagreements, compare interpretations and identify questions that require further evidence.

The discussion will address:

- what the presented evidence establishes and what remains uncertain;
- how contamination, hydrological change, land use and community livelihoods interact;
- which explanations can be tested through field investigation or archival research;
- where existing research approaches leave important questions unanswered;
- which questions should be carried into Friday's sessions and Saturday's project discussions.

The organisers will moderate the exchange and record areas of agreement, competing explanations and unresolved questions. Participants are encouraged to identify concrete cases, evidence needs and possible connections between contributions.

16:40–16:50 — Organisers' Daily Synthesis

Review of documented findings, principal uncertainties and questions carried into Friday.

16:50–17:00 — Organisers' Closing Remarks

Practical information and introduction to the next day's programme.

17:00 — End of the formal programme

After the Formal Programme

Informal Dinner and Evening by Charles Bridge

After the formal programme, participants are warmly invited to continue the evening informally at the restaurant located in the same building as the conference venue, with views across the Vltava River towards Charles Bridge and Prague's historic centre.

This is not an official conference session, organised dinner or obligatory social event. There will be no speeches, formal programme or expectation to attend. Participants who wish to join may order according to their own preferences and settle their own bill directly with the restaurant.

Those who prefer a quieter evening are equally welcome to explore the surrounding historic centre, walk along the Vltava or visit Charles Bridge and the nearby areas of Old Prague.

Friday 16 October

Day 2 — How Would We Investigate It?

09:00–17:00 | Prague local time

The second day examines three distinct dimensions of the long-term consequences of war: chemical contamination, human memory and the transformation of post-war territories. Each session combines individual presentations with discussion and the organisers' synthesis, identifying questions to carry into Saturday's project development.

09:00–09:15 — Organisers' Opening

Review of Day 1 and introduction to the scientific and practical questions for Day 2.

Dioxin Contamination and Its Long-Term Consequences

Dioxin contamination associated with the Vietnam War has become a symbol of the enduring environmental consequences of warfare, yet major gaps in knowledge remain unresolved decades later. This session brings American and Vietnamese contributions into direct discussion alongside other cases, examining what is known, what remains unexplained and how these gaps can be investigated.

09:15–09:20 — Organisers' introduction

09:20–09:35 — Cu Thi Dung and Vu Dinh Phong

Archival Sources of the Republic of Vietnam Government at National Archives Center II on Chemical Defoliants During the Vietnam War.

09:35–09:50 — Nguyen Hieu Trung

Decades After the Conflict: RENEW's Integrated Model for Post-War Land Release and Community Recovery in Quang Tri, Vietnam.

09:50–10:05 — Kenneth Ray Olson

Engineering Transformations of the New York Canal System and Long-Term Environmental and Public Health Implications.

10:05–10:20 — Donna Tornoe

The Tactical–Commercial Distinction: 2,4,5-T, TCDD, and the Recognition of War-Related Health Harm in the Panama Canal Zone.

10:20–10:40 — Coffee Break

10:40–10:55 — David R. Speidel

Predictive Environmental Health Risk Assessment for Military Operations: Preventing Long-Term Human Health Consequences.

10:55–11:10 — Kenneth Ray Olson

Environmental and Human Health Impacts of Agent Orange Manufacturing on the Tittabawassee, Saginaw, and Kanawha Rivers in Eastern United States.

11:10–11:25 — Andrew Gibbs

Beyond the TCDD Lens in Paritutu, New Plymouth, New Zealand: Invisible Phenoxy-Herbicide Co-Contaminants, Visible Developmental Signals, and Decision-Making under Incomplete Evidence.

11:25–11:40 — Laboratory of Information Systems

From Dioxin Source to Long-Term Biological Consequences: A New Information Framework for Reconstructing Wartime Contamination.

11:40–12:20 — Discussion

Participants will examine unresolved questions concerning contamination sources, exposure pathways, co-contaminants and long-term environmental and health consequences. Particular attention will be given to how archival records, field evidence and information systems can support investigation across the cases presented.

12:20–12:30 — Organisers' synthesis

Principal findings, unresolved evidence gaps and research questions for Saturday.

12:30–13:30 — Lunch

War and Memory

Human Experience of War

War leaves lasting consequences in personal and collective memory, including questions surrounding mass graves, victim identification and the interpretation of contested historical sites. This methodologically distinct session examines how testimony, archives and information systems can preserve these experiences and support long-term post-conflict recovery.

13:30–13:35 — Organisers' introduction

13:35–13:50 — Zoraida Hijosa Valdizán and Jaime del Rey Gómez-Morata

The Valley of Cuelgamuros: Reinterpreting a Contested Site of Memory.

13:50–14:05 — Zoraida Hijosa Valdizán and Jaime del Rey Gómez-Morata

Spain's Experience of Exhumation, Identification and Democratic Memory as a Long-Term Post-Conflict Recovery Process.

14:05–14:20 — Laboratory of Information Systems

When War Comes Home: A Humanistic Archive for Veterans, Families, and the Long-Term Consequences of War.

14:20–14:35 — Laboratory of Military Ecotones

From Fragmented Records to Reliable Victim Data: Information Systems for Long-Term Post-Conflict Recovery.

14:35–14:55 — Discussion — Preserving the Memory of War

Participants will discuss the preservation of testimony and records, the reliability of victim data and the interpretation of historical sites. The discussion will consider how these approaches can retain individual experiences while supporting responsible historical investigation.

14:55–15:00 — Organisers' synthesis

15:00–15:20 — Coffee Break

Post-War Territories

From Destruction to Decades of Uncertainty?

Post-war territories often follow paths of recovery and development that differ substantially from the expectations formed when a conflict ends. Even major investment and large-scale projects may produce unexpected outcomes, revealing gaps in our understanding of settlement, land use, property relations and community change.

15:20–15:25 — Organisers' introduction

15:25–15:40 — Kosovo contribution

From Return to Sustainable Communities. Framework of Return and Community Stabilization.

15:40–15:55 — Kosovo contribution

From Return to Sustainable Communities. Young People, Employment and Demographic Sustainability.

15:55–16:10 — Sandra F. Joireman

People, Paper, and Property: A Comparative Framework for Post-Conflict Territorial Transformation.

16:10–16:25 — Anna Tymoshenko

Long-Term War-Induced Transformations of Settlement and Land-Use Systems: Regimes of Scientific Recognition and Research Patterns.

16:25–16:40 — Laboratory of Military Ecotones

The Morphology of Post-War Territory as a Research Object.

16:40–16:50 — Discussion and organisers' synthesis

Why do post-war territorial transformations diverge from planned recovery trajectories? Identify the principal questions and possible comparative research directions for Saturday.

16:50–17:00 — Organisers' Closing Remarks

Synthesis of the day's three directions and identification of questions for Saturday's discussions and project development.

17:00 — End of the formal programme

After the Formal Programme

Historical Walk through Prague

Participants are invited to join a free, optional walk through Prague's historic centre, beginning near the conference venue. The walk offers an informal opportunity to continue conversations and enjoy the evening city, with the possibility of visiting nearby cafés or restaurants; any refreshments are paid for individually.

Saturday 17 October

Day 3 — What Are We Going to Build?

09:30–15:00 | Prague local time

The final day uses two thematic overviews as starting points for discussion, drawing on the evidence and questions raised during Days 1 and 2. The afternoon is devoted to practical project conditions, possible collaborations and the definition of initial work packages.

09:30–09:45 — Organisers' Opening

Review of Days 1 and 2, introduction to the final day and identification of questions to carry into project discussions.

Overview 2 — Artificial Intelligence and Research on the Consequences of War

This session examines how scientist–AI collaboration can support research on the long-term consequences of war, from hypothesis generation and evidence assessment to field verification. Eight contributions are brought together in one overview, providing a basis for discussion of research methods and their practical application.

09:45–09:50 — Organisers' introduction

09:50–10:10 — Thematic overview of eight papers — 20 minutes

The following contributions are presented collectively in one overview. Full presentations are available as MP4 recordings.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

The Scientist–AI System: Rethinking Research on War-Related Environmental Contamination.

Laboratory of Information Systems

Who Is the Author and Why Is the Problem Still Unsolved? AI and the Failure of Super-Normal Science.

Laboratory of Information Systems

Responsibility to the Problem: An Explicit Standard for the Expert–AI System.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

AI-Assisted Hypothesis Generation: From Fragmented Manifestations to the Morphology of War Contamination.

Laboratory of Information Systems

Evidence Status and Pathological Uncertainty: A Working Standard for War Contamination Information.

Laboratory of Military Ecotones

Field Verification in the Scientist–AI System: From Pathological Uncertainty to Quality Data.

Laboratory of Information Systems

The Scientist–AI Research System: An Integrated Working Standard for War-Related Environmental Contamination.

Dmitry Nikolaenko

From Scientific Recognition to Scientific Explanation: Organising Investigation of Long-Term Military Environmental Contamination.

10:10–10:30 — Discussion and organisers' synthesis

Which elements of the proposed research approach can be applied in an initial project? Participants will discuss evidence requirements, field verification and responsibilities within scientist–AI collaboration.

10:30–11:00 — Coffee Break

Overview 3 — Complex Ecological Relationships and the Environmental Legacies of Dioxin

Research on New Zealand Dolphins and Competing Explanations as an Example of the Refusal to Investigate Complex Ecological Relationships and the Repetition of Previously Established Findings

This overview examines competing explanations for the decline of Hector's and Māui dolphins, including hypotheses concerning wartime chemical legacies. It asks what evidence would be needed to distinguish between these explanations and investigate possible ecological connections.

11:00–11:05 — Organisers' introduction

11:05–11:25 — Thematic overview of three papers — 20 minutes

The following contributions are presented collectively in one overview. Full presentations are available as MP4 recordings.

Andrew Gibbs

Structural Falsification, Scientific Silence, and a New Research Strategy: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Case.

Andrew Gibbs and Dmitry Nikolaenko

Demographic Precision and Causal Narrowness: A Critical Review of Bennington Et Al. 2026 on Hector's Dolphin Fecundity and Bycatch Management.

Andrew Gibbs

Competing Hypotheses and Scientific Non-Recognition: Investigating the Hector's and Māui Dolphin Decline in the Context of Wartime Chemical Legacies.

11:25–11:45 — Discussion and organisers' synthesis

The problem is that the scientific community often refuses to investigate complex ecological relationships. Projects address largely routine topics and follow research programmes geared towards endlessly reproducing already established findings.

Participants will consider testable hypotheses, missing evidence and possible first investigative steps. The organisers will identify questions relevant to the afternoon's project discussions.

11:45–12:45 — Lunch

12:45–13:55 — Implementation Discussion

How Can Projects Operate Under Difficult Real-World Conditions?

This session tests the proposed research structures against contrasting operational situations in Ukraine, Sudan, Tigray and other territories with limited access. Its purpose is to identify concrete project risks, realistic starting conditions and workable safeguards.

12:45–12:50 — Organisers' introduction

12:50–13:20 — Case discussion 1 — Ukraine (soil, water, settlement patterns and population migration)

How can an international project establish transparent responsibilities, verifiable outputs, independent quality control and meaningful participation by local specialists? The discussion will also consider safeguards against the mechanical reproduction of existing research routines.

13:20–13:50 — Case discussion 2 — Sudan, Tigray and other territories with limited access (soil, water, settlement patterns and population migration)

How can research begin when access is restricted, reliable contacts are difficult to establish and potential local partners may be unable or unwilling to present work publicly? Participants will discuss feasible first tasks, verification of information and appropriate forms of cooperation.

13:50–13:55 — Organisers' synthesis

Identify the practical conditions and unresolved questions to carry into project development.

13:55–14:40 — Project Development Workshop

From Conference Question to First Work Package

Participants will develop a small number of project ideas emerging from the three days. Each group will define:

- the research question and the decision it is intended to support;
- the minimum evidence required;
- the geographical and institutional scope;
- the first realistic work package or pilot;
- responsibilities for collection, interpretation and verification;
- the principal risks and quality-control measures;
- the next action, a proposed responsible person or organisation, and a review timeframe.

13:55–14:00 — Selection of project questions and working groups

14:00–14:25 — Group discussion and preparation of initial work packages

14:25–14:40 — Brief reports from up to three groups

The workshop does not require complete project proposals. Its purpose is to agree on defined, reviewable next steps and record where further evidence, partners or decisions are needed.

14:40–14:50 — Final Conference Synthesis

What Are We Going to Build?

The organisers and section moderators will bring together the principal results of the three days and the workshop reports. They will distinguish between questions requiring further conceptual work, evidence gaps that can be addressed immediately and project ideas ready for a first task.

The final record will identify a limited number of follow-up actions, with proposed responsibilities and review points wherever these have been agreed.

14:50–15:00 — Organisers' Closing Remarks

Practical information on post-conference publications and cooperation, and confirmation of how participants will receive the conference results and follow-up information.

15:00 — End of the conference