

The [second edition of the Ecological Threat Report \(ETR\)](#) published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) assesses threats relating to food risk, water risk, rapid population growth, temperature anomalies and natural disasters in 178 independent states and territories of the world.

One of the main conclusions of the report are that degradation of resources leads to food insecurity and undernourishment, which in turn lead to conflict, and - again - to further resource degradation. However, another element enters in this vicious cycle: conflicts also lead to less cross-border trade among nations.

The report identifies three clusters of ecological hotspots where these problems are particularly severe and susceptible to escalate, two of them being situated in Africa, specifically: the Sahel-Horn of Africa belt (extending from Mauritania in West Africa to Somalia in the East) and the Southern African belt (from Angola to Madagascar).

The Sahel, an area recently affected by a significant growth of violent conflicts, has a concentration of some of the countries with the highest resource degradation and undernourishment levels. This belt, apart from hosting some of the most severely food insecure and undernourished countries in the world (like Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan), is also characterized by extremely low levels of trade.

The conclusion that can be read between the lines of the study is that solving conflicts in these areas is necessary for increasing trade (which in turn can increase wellness of populations), and that in order to solve conflicts, it is necessary to increase resilience of these countries to climate and famine emergencies.

The final recommendation is that the international community should prioritise initiatives addressed to these countries aimed at building the resilience necessary to withstand climate and famine shocks (droughts, floods, locusts and other plagues invasions are an example) in the future, by protecting their populations and infrastructure from these events.

This would also indirectly promote a growth of trade between these nations.

