


Chapter 2

Current Maritime Delimitation Activities in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea: An Evaluation from International Maritime Law Perspective



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DOI: [10.15405/BI.20221101.2](https://doi.org/10.15405/BI.20221101.2)

Abstract

The 'Republic of Cyprus', which today consists only of Greek Cypriots, has been carrying out activities to limit its marine zones in the Eastern Mediterranean, in order to explore natural resources. Turkey and Turkish Cypriots have been claiming that they also have legal rights over the maritime natural resources in Eastern Mediterranean. Another incident in the Eastern Mediterranean is the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding between Turkey and the UN-recognized government of Libya, namely the Government of National Accord, for delimiting their maritime zones. This is an important treaty for Eastern Mediterranean that effected the regional relations. This treaty is registered to the list of the UN Secretary General, and it must be respected by other actors. But the claims of other regional States such as the 'Republic of Cyprus' and the plans for EastMed pipeline conflicts with this treaty. Additionally, to these, two other important regional States, Israel and Lebanon, have been experiencing tensions due to their claims on maritime zones. This is another example of the unstable relations between the Eastern Mediterranean States. Parties of the Eastern Mediterranean disputes must coordinate a multilateral conference for solving all these disputes over Eastern Mediterranean delimitation activities and exploration of natural resources.

Keywords: Eastern Mediterranean Sea, UNCLOS, Maritime Delimitation, Regional Actors, Natural Resources

2.1. Eastern Mediterranean maritime delimitation disputes and the Cyprus problem

2.1.1. The Ongoing Cyprus problem under international law and its effects to the eastern Mediterranean maritime delimitation challenges

The crisis in Eastern Mediterranean on the maritime delimitation is closely linked to the Cyprus problem. In 1960, Republic of Cyprus as a *sui generis* member of the international community was established under the guarantee of United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey. This state consisted of two main communities, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. The establishment of Republic of Cyprus with these two bi-communal structure was found as a midpoint formula between the *Enosis* and *Taksim*. The bicomunal partnership State was established for this former United Kingdom colony by the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots under the 1959 London-Zurich Agreements (Sözen, 2004).

The system created by the 1959 Zurich-London Agreements could achieve to work only for three years, and the bicomunal state structure collapsed in 1963, when the Greek Cypriot President, III. *Makarios*, tried to change the constitution on 13 points and eliminate the provisions that protects the Turkish Cypriots' rights in the governance of Republic of Cyprus (Göktürk, 2014).

After the attempt of III. *Makarios*, ethnic conflicts in this 'partnership State' started between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots and continued until 1974. In 1974, in order to unite Cyprus with Greece, a military coup was made by Greece. This was supported by an ultra-right armed group of Greek Cypriots. This military coup forced Turkey to intervene to Cyprus under the 1960 Treaty of Guarantee, and the military intervention of Turkey aimed to restore the order in the island and to protect the Turkish Cypriots. The military intervention of Turkey resulted in division of Cyprus into two: Turkish Cypriots started to live in the north of Cyprus, and Greek Cypriots started to live in the south of Cyprus. They were living in the same island, but separately and homogeneously (Çubukçuoğlu, 2014a).

Afterwards, northern part of Cyprus declared its independence in 1983. This new State, namely Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), has been recognized only by Turkey since then. But the government of 'Republic of Cyprus',

which is called as 'Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus' by Turkey and TRNC, is accepted as the legitimate representative government of the whole island, even though it does not represent Turkish Cypriots anymore. Turkey, on the other hand, does not recognize the 'Republic of Cyprus' (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Directorate for EU Affairs, 2017).

Since Cyprus was divided into two parts, the Eastern Mediterranean and its possible delimitation became a subject of debate among the 'Republic of Cyprus', TRNC, Turkey, Greece and many other regional States. The tension in the region increased in 2002. In 2002, an important action was taken by the 'Republic of Cyprus' to explore for hydrocarbons in partnership with Noble Energy, which is a Texas-based company. 'Republic of Cyprus' authorities gave formal permission to Norwegian company to search for natural resources in its alleged exclusive economic zone. Then, clashes regarding the Eastern Mediterranean between Turkey and 'Republic of Cyprus' started in that year (Eissler & Arasil, 2014).

After exploration and drilling activities of hydrocarbon resources especially in 2011, when Noble Energy discovered a gas field in the alleged exclusive economic zone of the 'Republic of Cyprus,' the tension in the Eastern Mediterranean has increased once more. Turkey claims that the 'Republic of Cyprus' authorities must negotiate with the TRNC authorities about the distribution of the island's natural resources. Turkey, in order to show that it will protect its and Turkish Cypriots' rights in the Eastern Mediterranean, sent its vessels to different parts of the region. But this attitude of Turkey worried European Union and NATO, as they also follow the developments with deep concern regarding the Aegean Sea dispute between Greece and Turkey (European Parliament, 2020).

Turkey feels that it is excluded from the gas exporting plans in the Eastern Mediterranean by the other regional and non-regional actors. It knows that being excluded may cause the loss of an opportunity to claim rights on natural resources. Also, its political strength and its chance to have the geopolitical dominance in the region could be lost. In order to show that Turkey will insist on protecting Turkish nation's and Turkish Cypriots' rights over natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey strongly opposes the delimitation agreements made by 'Republic of Cyprus' with the third countries (Erdoğan, 2021).

It is clear that the *de facto* situation of Cyprus complicates the Eastern Mediterranean dispute even more. In order to protect both 'Turkish Cypriots' and

Greek Cypriots' rights over the natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean maritime zones around Cyprus, the possibility of waiting for a final settlement in the island that will be approved by the United Nations and will be reached by two communities, may be suggested (Doğru, 2019). However, as the Europe is in a need of gas, it will not be realistic to expect for waiting until a final settlement.

2.1.2. Relations between Cyprus and the other parties to the Eastern Mediterranean maritime delimitation dispute

Even though Turkey is the State that has the longest coastline in the Eastern Mediterranean, if it accepts the claims of Greek Cypriot authorities, it will have a very limited maritime zone in this area. Many other States made international treaties with Greek Cypriot authorities, and exploration of natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean have started. EU and many other States, under the need of gas, support the Greek Cypriot authorities for exploration of the natural resources here. This switches the character of Eastern Mediterranean debate from a legal issue to a political and legal crisis.

When the Eastern Mediterranean crisis is approached from Turkey's aspect, the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone delimitation problem in this region arise in terms of three different geographical areas. In the first area Turkey, Syria and the TRNC coasts are located. In the second region, it is seen that Turkey and the TRNC have coasts. In the third and last region, there are the coasts of Turkey, Greece, TRNC, 'Republic of Cyprus' and Egypt (Doğru, 2019).

The region where the current conflict is mostly seen is the third region. In this region where there are Greek coasts and Turkish coasts, Greece wants a delimitation agreement between its islands and Anatolia. As its islands are really close to Anatolia, Turkey claims that this is not possible, otherwise Turkey will be entitled to exercise its sovereignty in a very narrow sea area in the Eastern Mediterranean, only around the Gulf of Antalya, as it is aimed by "Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EastMed Gas Forum)" (Erdoğan, 2021). 'Republic of Cyprus' authorities, on the other hand, made many delimitation treaties with other regional States, such as Egypt (in 2003), Lebanon (in 2007), and Israel (in 2010) and declare exclusive economic zone under these treaties (Yaycı, 2012). Turkey has objected to these, as it claims that these activities violate the rights of Turkey and Turkish Cypriots.

Turkey argues that Cyprus is a divided island, and the 'Republic of Cyprus', which *de facto* represents only Greek Cypriots, cannot claim rights in the marine natural resources around the whole island. There is no unified island, and this means that there is no single exclusive economic zone around the island (Çubukçuoğlu, 2014a). According to Turkey, there must be comprehensive settlement negotiations under the auspices of the UN, including all regional actors. Some international companies started drilling activities under the official permission of the 'Republic of Cyprus' authorities, but the areas which drilling is made are overlapping with Turkey's alleged continental shelf areas (Erdoğan, 2021). Turkey tried to stop the treaty between Egypt and the 'Republic of Cyprus', but it failed. However, it achieved to persuade Lebanese authorities to ratify the treaty they made with 'Republic of Cyprus' (Eissler & Arasil, 2014).

The Turkey General Directorate of Petroleum Affairs granted oil and natural gas exploration and extraction licences to the Turkish Petroleum Corporation, which is a state-owned enterprise in Turkey. The EU disapproved Turkey's such initiatives by accusing it acting unilaterally and exacerbating tension within the region (European Commission, 2020). Also, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece and the United Arab Emirates adopted a Joint Declaration and they "expressed their deepest concern over the current escalation and continuous provocative actions in the Eastern Mediterranean" (Joint Declaration adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus ..., 2020). The 'Republic of Cyprus' sent a letter to the UN Secretariat General, and claimed that this constituted a violation of sovereignty rights of the 'Republic of Cyprus' (Letter by Permanent Representative of Cyprus, 2012).

The TRNC Cabinet granted the necessary license to this corporation on 22 September 2011. If any natural resource is obtained as a result of these activities, the share rate will be 50-50% between Turkey and TRNC. Turkey sent three vessels to the region for exploration and drilling; one seismic vessel, the Barbaros Hayrettin Paşa, and two drilling vessels, Fatih and Yavuz. However, such kind of drilling activities, by their complex nature, are efficient if all regional states and many multinational energy companies act collectively (Adamides & Christou, 2012).

The fact that the TRNC is not recognized as a State by international community, it is not possible for the members of the international community to act collectively with it. Consequently, the exploration and drilling activities in the northern coasts

of the island started with the cooperation of only Turkey and TRNC (Krhovská, 2014, p. 329). Turkey announced a plan on seismic research and hydrocarbon exploration activities under the treaty between Turkey and TRNC. In this plan, seven areas overlap with the 'Republic of Cyprus' alleged exclusive economic zone (Çubukçuoğlu, 2014b).

The 'Republic of Cyprus' authorities considers the cooperation between TRNC and Turkey as a violation of its sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone (Tamçelik & Kurt, 2014). There are crises such as harassment of other parties' vessels. For example, a Turkish vessel escorted a ship deployed by the company Northern Alliance to harass it, as a response to the 'Republic of Cyprus' drilling permissions. Turkey also blocked an Italian energy company's vessel from reaching the 'Republic of Cyprus' alleged maritime zones in February 2018 (Eissler & Arasil, 2014).

Basically, Turkey claims that the maritime delimitation should be done by considering the principle of proportionality and by considering the existence of other regional States in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey must not refrain from taking place in the same multilateral conference with 'Republic of Cyprus'. As it is well known, under international law attending with a party to the same multilateral conference which the statehood or recognition of this party will not be discussed, could not be considered as a situation of implied recognition. So, taking place in the same multilateral conference does not always mean that parties recognized each other as States (Erdal, 2005). Therefore, Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots can be separately represented in this multilateral conference without discussing statehood or recognition.

A solution for the Eastern Mediterranean delimitation must be done in a multilateral environment. Otherwise, there would be unstable energy relations in the region, and there would be always a threat over regional security. The ongoing Cyprus problem worsens the crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean. It should not be forgotten that the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, proposed to have a multilateral conference on Eastern Mediterranean. This should be welcomed by Europeans and other regional States, as it creates instability to try to solve this crisis only with bilateral treaties or actions (Adamides & Christou, 2016).

2.2. The ‘Turkey-Libya memorandum of understanding’: a new challenge for the Mediterranean Sea delimitation disputes

2.2.1. Internal and external problems of Libya and the need for an agreement with Turkey regarding the Eastern Mediterranean Sea dispute

The Gaddafi regime, which has been in power since 1969, was overthrown after the military intervention carried out by NATO, under the resolution of UN Security Council dated 17 March 2011 (UN Security Council, S/RES/1973(2011)). This situation caused a regime change in Libya. Following the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, border problems, refugee crisis and terrorism were experienced in Libya. During this period, due to the non-international armed conflict in Libya, all groups were conflicting with each other. As the acts of violence intensified again in 2014, this period started to be referred as the second Libyan non-international armed conflict, following the first non-international armed conflict period which was happened in 2011. In 2015, the Libyan Political Agreement was made. Afterwards, with the support of the UN, the Government of National Reconciliation was established on 30 March 2016; but this could not finish the struggle between the political actors in Libya. The struggle of power continued between the House of Representatives and the Government of National Accord (Taşdemir, 2020).

The political instability in Libya, which is a rich state in natural gas resources, undoubtedly caused other states and actors to direct their attention there. The Government of National Accord, established with the support of the UN, was supported by states such as Turkey, Sudan and Qatar, while the House of Representatives was supported by the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Russia and France. While the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord was increasing its effective control over the country (Karakaya & Çelik, 2021), the most prominent figure of the Tobruk-based Libyan National Army (which is also known as House of Representatives and claims that it exercises the effective control over the country), Khalifa Haftar resigned (Taşdemir, 2021).

As there was a failure in creating a unique authority that will govern Libya, the War for Tripoli was started in April 2019 by the Dignity Operation of Haftar. In the end, Haftar had to propose a ceasefire (Erdoğan, 2021). This ceasefire was declared

between the conflicting parties on 21 August 2020. According to this ceasefire declaration, the cities of Sirte and Jufra would be demilitarized, the oil producing would rebegin, and an election would be held in 2021. It is seen that the departure of foreign military units from the Libyan territory was accepted (Karakaya & Çelik, 2021).

Latest news from Libya records that this country continues to endeavor to end the acts of violence and rebuild state institutions, as a longlasting peace have not yet been succeeded by the Libyan nation (United States Institute of Peace, 2020). Having defined borders is important for such kind of States, as this would let them to control their territory. One of the activities of the Government of National Accord, which is the recognized government of Libya by the UN (Taşdemir, 2020), was to make a maritime delimitation treaty with Turkey, as they have opposite coasts. On 27 November 2019, Libya made the Memorandum of Understanding with Turkey. By delimiting the 18.6 nautical mile area between Libya and Turkey, the parties designated their continental shelves and exclusive economic zones.

2.2.2. Legal regime that is created by memorandum of understanding between Libya and Turkey and its consequences

The unilateral declaration of the 'Republic of Cyprus' on its exclusive economic zone and the ongoing hydrocarbon exploration activities forced Turkey to make a delimitation agreement with Libya, as Libya is another important regional country. In November 2019, Turkish Government and the Government of National Accord made the agreement that delimits their boundaries of continental shelf and exclusive economic zone. This deal between Turkey and Libya is a strategic incident, as the other regional States and international actors have been continuing to their USA and European Union backed exploration activities, without watching the rights of Turkey in Eastern Mediterranean (Erdoğan, 2021).

The agreement between Turkey and Libya has three main importance for Turkey. Firstly, by this international act, Turkey had a legal basis for its maritime zone boundaries at least in some part of the Mediterranean Sea. This agreement establishes maritime zone boundaries between Turkey and Libya, by declaring 18.6 nautical miles of continental shelf, and 200 nautical miles of exclusive economic zone. This agreement draws a line on the map that divides the eastern and western

parts of the Mediterranean. Secondly, Turkey showed that it is a State which tries to solve its disputes by mutual agreements with other relevant legal persons; as it is important to collaborate with other States in a closed or semi-enclosed seas while exercising rights and fulfilling obligations (Erdoğan, 2021).

Lastly, Turkey prevented Libya to reach agreements with the 'Republic of Cyprus', Greece or Egypt that will threat Turkey's interests in the region. But, on the other hand, this agreement is criticized by the European Union and other Eastern Mediterranean States. According to them, this agreement threatens maritime security in Eastern Mediterranean, have the potential to impede the gas exploration, and may ruin the pipeline infrastructures in the central part of the region (Acer, 2019).

Articles 4/2 and 3 are important provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding. Under Article 4/2, two parties can make new agreements for exploiting resources in their maritime exclusive economic zones, cooperatively. Also, under Article 4/3, any future agreements or partnerships of one party of this memorandum would be made only after negotiating the situation with the other party. Other regional States, such as France, the 'Republic of Cyprus', Egypt and Greece declared the Memorandum of Understanding between Turkey and Libya as legally "null and void." According to their criticisms, this would cause regional instability. Also, according to Greece, it is not possible to accept this agreement, as there is the island of Crete between Turkey and Libya in the Mediterranean Sea, and this island belongs to Greece (Erdoğan, 2021).

Greece and Egypt, although they have no common maritime borders, made an international agreement in 2020 as a response to Memorandum of Understanding, for blocking Turkey's claims. Turkey protested this agreement and officially informed the UN on the issue that the agreement which regulates the regions between Greece and Egypt overlaps with Turkey's continental shelf. Also, Greece made another bilateral agreement with Italy, again in 2020 (Erdoğan, 2021).

An international agreement must be approved under the national legal system of its parties. Although the Grand National Assembly of Turkey approved this agreement, the Parliament of Libya did not approve this Memorandum of Understanding. On the other hand, the Government of National Accord's Presidential Council ratified this agreement and ordered the relevant national bodies to implement its provisions (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies,

2020). This legal problem must be solved under the national legal system of Libya to have legal certainty and predictability. As this treaty is registered with the UN Secretariat General under Article 102 of the UN Charter, it must be respected by other actors.

2.3. 'Another' long-lasting dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea: The Case of Israel and Lebanon

2.3.1. Lebanon and Israel relations: Two coastal neighbours in the Mediterranean Sea

Israel had problems with Lebanon because of the pro-Palestinian groups that were in Lebanon. According to Israel's claims for example, on 18 January 1976 some members of the Palestine Liberation Army that were under the command of Syria, entered Lebanon. Although their number was only 1200 and they took no action, this was met by disapprobation of Israel. Under this justification, military operations were carried out against Lebanon by Israel from time to time (Levey, 2021).

Israel made military attacks on Lebanon and many Palestinian and Lebanese people died as a result of these attacks. Israel claimed that every single attack that was done by Israel was a retribution for some activities of Palestinian commandos next to the border of Lebanon and Israel. In Israel's tense relationship with Lebanon, the USA has always stood by Israel, while Syria has supported Lebanon. On the Lebanon-Israel issue, the basis of the USA alliance with Israel lies both in the good relations between the Israel and the USA, and in Russia's influence on Syria. The concern of the USA was that Lebanon may fall under the influence of Russia. In 1982, when Lebanon was experiencing the Lebanese Civil War, Israel occupied some parts of southern Lebanon with the support of the USA. The West Beirut was encircled as a result of this occupation (Ryan, 1982).

Israel's claimed purpose was to banish the Palestinian fighters to these parts of Lebanon. These parts of Lebanon were under Israel's occupation until May 2000. When Israel withdrew, Hezbollah filled the gap in these parts, as it was established as a response to Israeli occupation. Between Hezbollah and Israel, a dispute over a small land was continued for a while (Abadi, 2020).

In 2006, after Hezbollah hostaged two Israeli soldiers, Israel made military operations against Hezbollah. During these operations, it was seen that Hezbollah had a military power and capacity that could not be underestimated (Mizrahi, 2020). Two of the biggest aims of Israel in its fight against Hezbollah were to show its own strength to other States and actors in the region that allegedly supporting Hezbollah, and weaken Hezbollah. Israeli officials thought that as a result of these military operations against Hezbollah, the South Lebanon border would be cleared of Hezbollah, and this would ensure Israel's border security. During these military operations, Israel thought that Lebanon and the moderates in Lebanon would at least not get involved in the hostilities, so that it would not have any difficulty in gaining military superiority against Hezbollah. On the contrary, the events led to an increase in the number of anti-Israeli radicals in Lebanon, and some groups supported Hezbollah. Thus, before any party could achieve a clear military superiority over another party, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was settled in the region and Israel's withdrawal process was completed on 7 November 2006 (SETA Lübnan Raporu, 2006).

Israel and Lebanon had no direct negotiations for about 30 years, until 2020s, when the representatives of both States started to meet under the mediation of UNIFIL. UNIFIL has also monitored the boundary since Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000, after a 22-year occupation period (Wählich, 2011).

Regarding the relations of these two States with the 'Republic of Cyprus', it is observed that Greek Cypriots tried to have direct and good relations with each of them. Lebanon made an agreement with the 'Republic of Cyprus' in 2007, but this agreement was not ratified by Lebanon. In this text, there was a point, namely "Point 1", that set a shared dividing point between Lebanon and the 'Republic of Cyprus'. In 2010, Lebanon claimed different maritime borders that conflicts with the ones written down in the above mentioned agreement, especially with the so-called "Point 1". As this agreement was not ratified by Lebanon, it must be accepted that there is not a legally binding international agreement between these States. Therefore, an agreement between them should be negotiated. The 'Republic of Cyprus' and Israel, on the other hand, made an agreement to delimit their maritime zones. In 2011, Lebanon protested this agreement between Cyprus and Israel, and claimed that the borders accepted in this agreement clash with the Lebanese exclusive economic zone (Wählich, 2011).

Israel and Lebanon unilaterally submitted their maritime borders to the UN. These submissions are unilateral proposals, and as United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Article 74 asks for the parties to make a mutual agreement between neighboring or opposing coastal States. Under this Article, an interim solution must be found between these parties until they make a final agreement. But, as Lebanon and Israel have weak communication, they still continue to have disputes not only over their maritime zone borders, but also land borders (Mizrahi, 2020).

There are important financial problems in Lebanon, as the country is affected badly by the Lebanese Civil War, instability, Covid- 19 pandemic and the explosion in Beirut in August 2020. Therefore, a peace atmosphere in the region and good relations with regional States will be good for Lebanon. Also, solving disputes with Lebanon and having mutual agreements over the maritime limits and sharing of marine sources will be advantageous for Israel as well. Because Israel imports nearly forty percent of its natural gas from Egypt. As saboteurs attack and destroy the gas pipeline of Egypt to Israel from time to time, it is becoming hard and costly for these two States to import and export gas. With a mutual agreement on the borders of their maritime zones and managing the drilling activities in the region, Israel and Lebanon can export natural gas to other States instead of importing (Wählisch, 2011).

2.3.2. The Case of Israel and Lebanon: An Important part of the conflicts over resources in the Eastern Mediterranean

Lebanon and Israel are dependent mainly on Egypt and other countries in terms of natural gas and oil (Eissler & Arasil, 2014). But it is claimed by a survey in 2010 that, unexplored reserves in the region was estimated to cover up to 122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas and 1.7 billion barrels of recoverable oil (Schenk et al., 2010). Lebanon and Israel started to have high tensions from time to time because of the possible gas reserves in the Mediterranean Sea, close to their coasts. They have legal disputes over their rights on the natural oil and gas reserves that are newly discovered. They have never reached to a mutual consent on their own maritime boundaries in Eastern Mediterranean. As they have no direct diplomatic relations, they could not find the necessary floor for agreeing on their maritime borders, and sharing of the natural sources (Wählisch, 2011).

Even though these two States could not reach an agreement, in 2011, Lebanon approved a law on energy under its domestic legal system in order to permit exploration of natural gas reserves in its claimed maritime zones. In some parts of the exclusive economic zone of Israel, natural gas has been found. Israel started to export gas to other regional States, by 2020. If Israel and Lebanon achieve to solve their disputes, Lebanon also will become a gas exporter. Relations between Lebanon, Israel, Turkey and the 'Republic of Cyprus' are strained in the Eastern Mediterranean. Turkey made a contract with a Norwegian firm in order to continue its seismic research in the Eastern Mediterranean, in an area where Israel and the 'Republic of Cyprus' currently do seismic researches. On the other hand, the EastMed pipeline, that Israel and the 'Republic of Cyprus' will export gas to Europe, is expected to be completed around 2025. This pipeline will pass through an area that Turkey claims as its exclusive economic zone, under the Turkey's agreement with Libya. It seems like there will be further tensions if these States cannot find a mutual map for the Eastern Mediterranean (Eissler & Arasil, 2014).

Lebanon ratified UNCLOS in January 1995; and although Israel is not a party to UNCLOS, these rules are nonetheless generally considered binding on both states as customary international law (Wählich, 2011). So, they must find a solution under international maritime law for their disputes over their borders. In 2020, Lebanon and Israel started to have meetings on their disputed maritime boundaries, under the mediation of the USA and UN (Mizrahi, 2020). As Israel and Lebanon have many conflicts over many different issues, for regional peace and security, they can use any kind of peaceful solution of international dispute methods to find solutions.

A peaceful atmosphere and cooperation in the Eastern Mediterranean are important for each actor that has an active role and legal claims in Eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, basis for negotiations and peaceful solution plans on boundary delimitation will reduce the risks and improve the possibility to act cooperatively in this region of the world. Parties of the Eastern Mediterranean dispute must think about a multilateral conference for this dispute (Schultheiss, 2021).

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