

Alexandre Brutelle

France



- Co-founder and director @EIF
- IJ Training and mentoring coordinator @CiFAR_EU
- Freelance investigative journalist
(Basta!, Jeune Afrique, Mediapart, L'Express, Bivol, Daraj, Middle East Monitor etc.)



EIF goals:

- **Developing a global network of journalists and experts dedicated to EIJ**
- **Developing and sharing research frameworks from single investigations**
- **Supporting, fundraising science-based reporting projects and tools**



EIF method:

- **Uncovering systemic issues / reproducible frameworks from a single story**
- **Readapting single reporting methods across countries**
- **e.g: Delineating impact zones across borders, water privatization abuses across the EU, extractivism monitoring across continents etc.**



**At the crossroads of these stories
we most often deal with:**

Agnotology:

The study of deliberate production of **scientific doubt** and **ignorance**.

It will mostly consists of **twisting a scientific consensus** in order to **avoid accountability** and/or **protect specific interests**.

Perenco's unconventional extractivism in Southern Tunisia



Perenco's gas concessions, Perenco's website 2021

a case-study of corporate and governmental disinformation

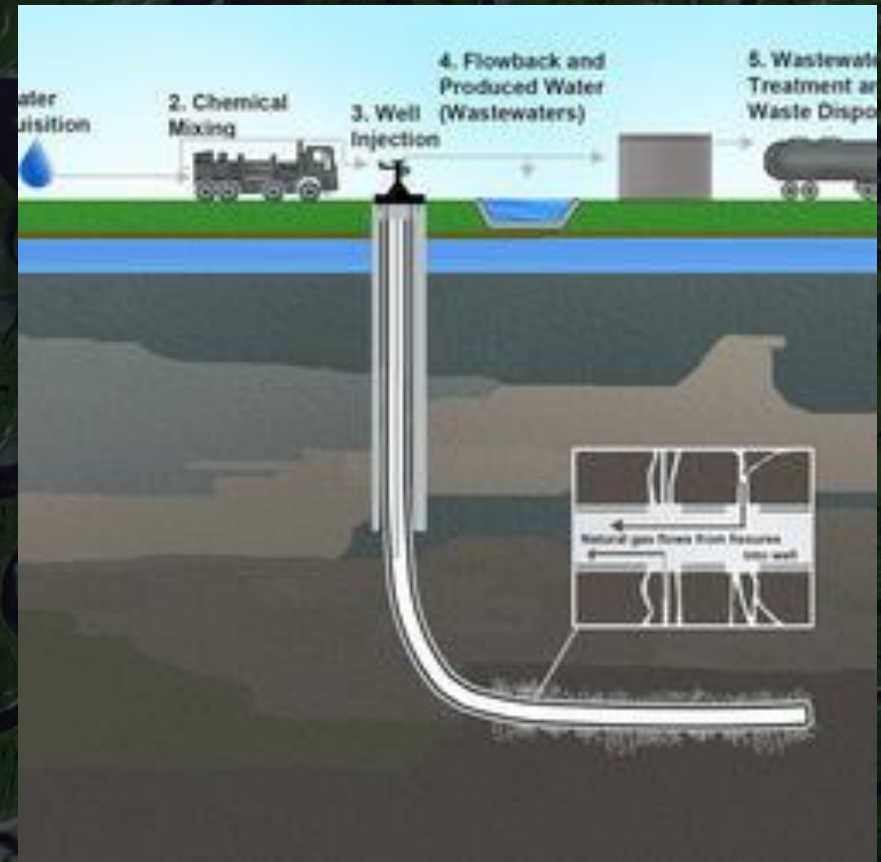
The core conflict 1/2:

French-British Company Perenco has been **accused of extracting shale gas** by several experts and civil society in **2014, in Southern Tunisia.**

A practice proven to be **environmentally harmful**, but also **illegal in the country.**

Environmental risks comprise:

- Disturbance of wildlife habitats
- Disturbance of agricultural activity
- Aquifers and drinking water contamination
- Seismic deregulation



US EPA infographic on the hydraulic fracturing process

The core conflict 2/2:

These accusations originated from the presence of **waste water ponds** on the site.

As well as from a 2010 **press release** on Perenco's website announcing **the first successful fracking job for shale exploitation in North Africa.**

A press release the company which was then deleted from the company's website and refuted by its representatives.

Saying they only extract conventional gas. A declaration supported by the ETAP (National Tunisian Oil Company), co-owner of the Franig concession.



El Franig concession aerial view, Bings Maps 2020

Our initial objective:

- **Finding out the current status of the concession in question**

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- **Mapping and monitoring similar sites operated by Perenco in the region (through satellite analysis and field reporting)**

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To establish if shale gas is indeed extracted, and to what extent

Data & indicators we needed:

- Accurate list of existing wells + their production status + their names
(inaccurate on ETAP website)
- Accurate geo-coordinates of the wells
(Inaccurate on the ETAP website)
- Depth of the wells
(unavailable on the ETAP website)
- Record of hydraulic fracturation events
(unavailable on ETAP website)

The Tunisian legal loophole:

- **Unconventional gas extraction** (ex: Shale or Tight gas), **is constitutionally illegal in Tunisia**, by case-law.
- The Tunisian Hydrocarbon Code **doesn't differentiate** conventional vs unconventional.
- Perenco has benefited from this **legal loophole** with the support of the government.

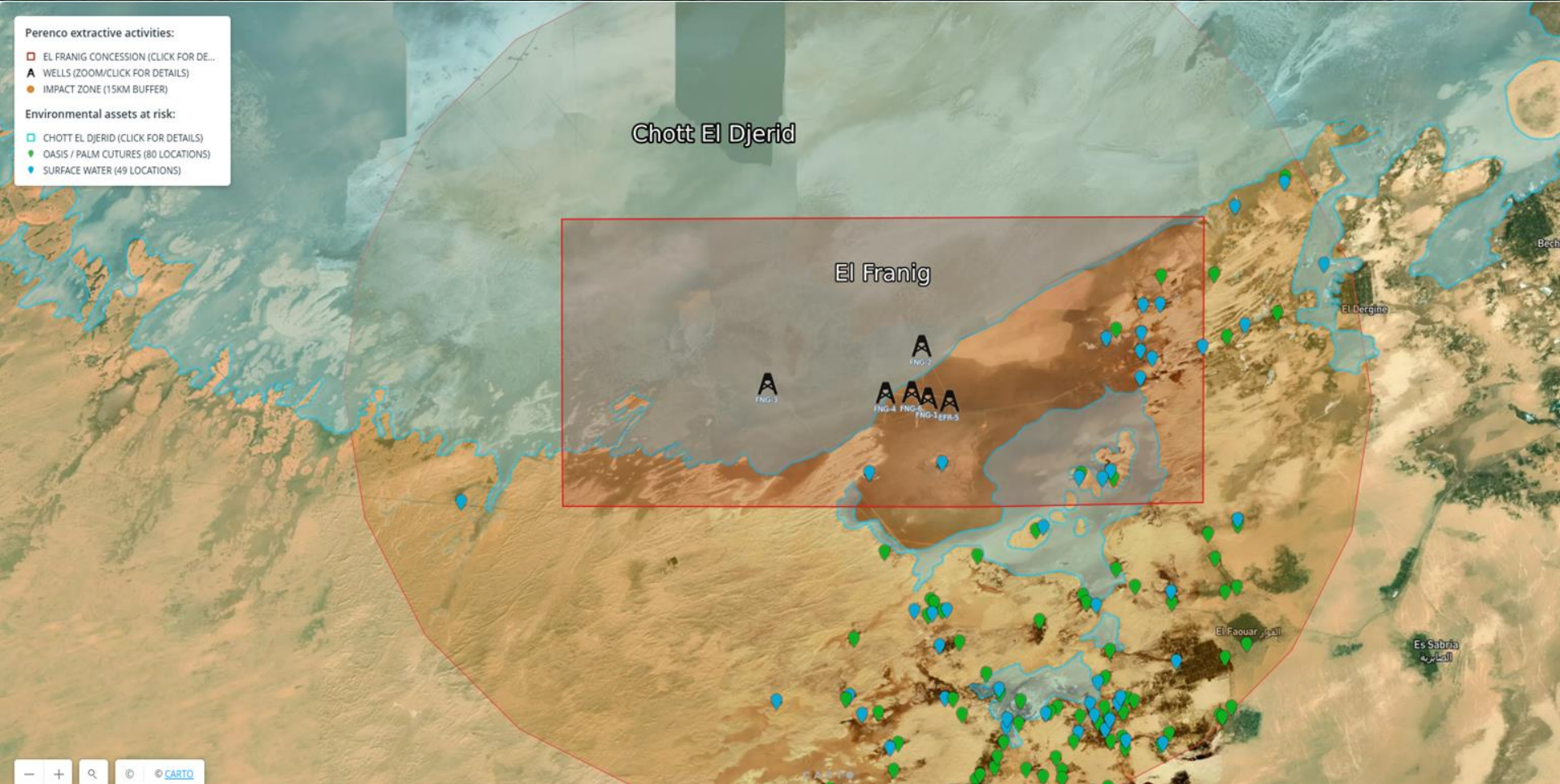
Scientific controversy vs consensus:

- **Missing legal framework = missing national standard and definition**

What the international standards/consensus say:

- According to the US Environmental Protection Agency: it is the extractive process that defines the nature of the hydrocarbons. Any frack job = unconventional extraction. An internal note from the Tunisian ministry of Energy uses this definition.
- In the EU, it is the nature of the **rock reservoir** targeted by a given well that defines the nature of the extractive process. Leaked discussions from state engineers clearly show they consider the Franig reservoir as non-conventional.

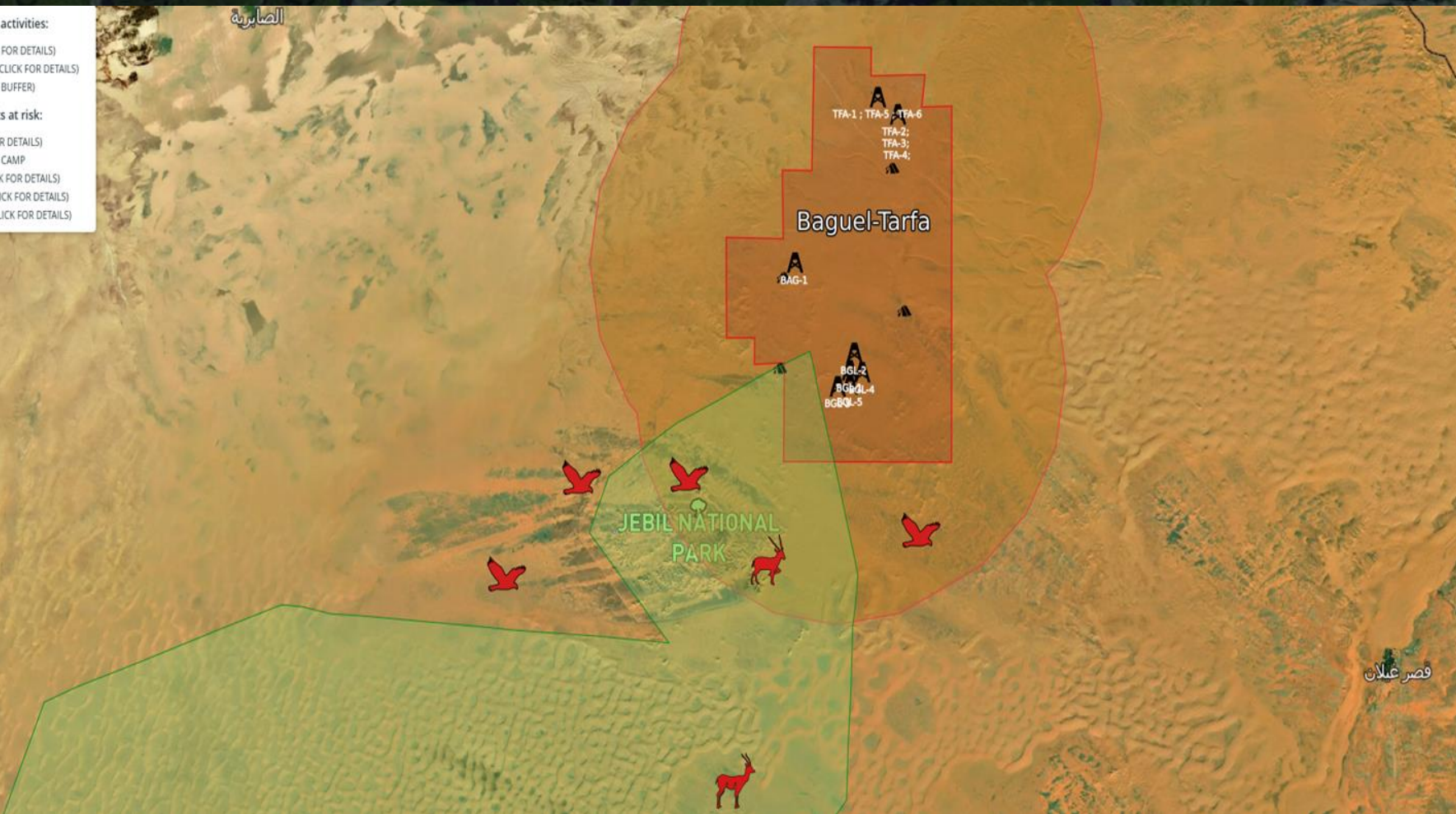
Franig concession:



Unconventional reservoir + Frac jobs

Baguel-Tarfa concession:

- Perenco's extractive activities:
- ▲ WELLS (CLICK/ZOOM FOR DETAILS)
 - BAGUEL-TARFA SITE (CLICK FOR DETAILS)
 - IMPACT ZONE (15KM BUFFER)
- Environmental assets at risk:
- JEBIL PARK (CLICK FOR DETAILS)
 - ▲ REST AREA / NOMAD CAMP
 - ▲ HOUBARA SITE (CLICK FOR DETAILS)
 - ▲ WHITE ANTILOPE (CLICK FOR DETAILS)
 - ▲ DORCAS GAZELLE (CLICK FOR DETAILS)



Conventional reservoir + Frac jobs

What participated to doubt and ignorance in this case :

- Lack of Transparency from the public and private operators.
- Conflict of interest between public and private operators.
- Incomplete National legal frameworks.
- Lack of data accuracy and data availability from public regulators and the company.
- **Military presence in the areas of interest**, adding to the opacity of the ongoing activities in these concessions. **Threats from the army** on the field.
- Existence of an ongoing scientific debate regarding the definition of “**unconventional gas**”.

Thank you for your time !



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**www.eiforum.org
alexandre.brutelle@eiforum.org
[Linkedin](#)**