

The Climate Change-Security Nexus: Case study of the Lake Chad Basin

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Abstract

The securitization of climate change has important implications in terms of how the issue is framed and addressed, at national and international policy levels. It has become clear that climate change poses multiple and overlapping security challenges, including in terms of livelihood insecurity, disruption to agriculture and energy infrastructure, can fuel social tensions, conflict, and displacement. But consensus is growing around a more moderate view that climate change is exacerbating already existing vulnerabilities, rather than being, by itself, an inevitable cause of insecurity. The idea that climate change will lead to violent conflict has received considerable attention and has been heavily disputed in the academic literature. Studies have argued that drought significantly increases the likelihood of sustained conflict for particularly vulnerable people whose livelihoods depend on agriculture. There is also a growing recognition of the fact that the drivers of violence are most often multi-dimensional and highly contextual. The Lake Chad Basin crisis provides an interesting example of this attempt to make a direct link between climate change and violence. More recent studies have shown that individuals are more likely to engage in violence, be displaced, migrate, or join armed groups, including violent extremist organizations such as Boko Haram and Islamic State in West African Province, if they feel marginalized and treated unfairly, and if they don't have access to basic services, rather than because of a warming climate.

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Introduction

Climate change does not cause conflict in and of itself. However it has over the years been identified as “a threat to global security”¹, “a threat multiplier”², “a driver of conflict”³, and “an accelerator of fragility”⁴. Such interlinkages are not yet perfectly well understood⁵, but an extensive body of literature has nevertheless explored the relationship between climate change and violence. This research paper sheds light on these dynamics in order to better comprehend how they interact and build on one another over time, with a special focus on the Lake Chad Basin.

The first section examines the literature on the nexus between climate change and conflict, and how it has evolved in recent years. The second section describes the theoretical framework and assumptions on which this study relies, and explains how they can be applied to the securitization of climate change. The third section discusses how climate-related security risks have been gaining international attention in recent years, along with continued policy discourse about the potential associations between climate change and security risks. Finally, the last section presents a case study of the Lake Chad Basin to demonstrate how climate change has exacerbated and interacted with different conflict drivers, including insecurity of livelihoods, weak governance, poverty and underdevelopment, and migration.

1. Lavietes, Matthew, “Climate Change Could Pose ‘catastrophic’ Security Threat, Experts Warn,” Reuters, February 25, 2020,

2. “Climate Change Recognized as ‘Threat Multiplier’, UN Security Council Debates Its Impact on Peace,” UN News, January 25, 2019,

3. In January 2018, the United Nations Security Council identified climate change as a driver of conflict across West Africa and the Sahel.

4. Kishan Khoday and Oscar Ekdahl, “Confronting Climate Change as an Accelerator of Crisis,” United Nations Development Program, March 11, 2017,

5. “Supporting Climate Security,” United Nations Development Program, accessed May 26, 2020,

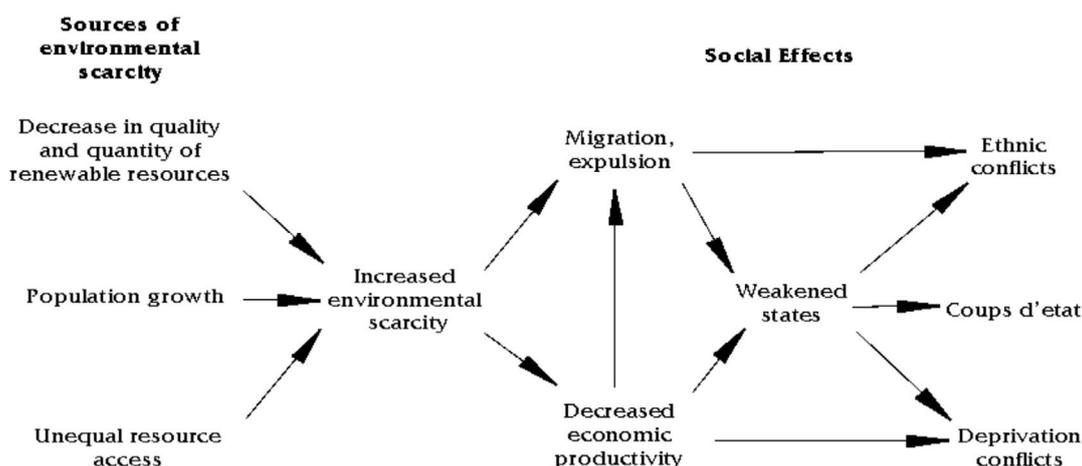
Part 1: The Academic Literature

The idea that climate change may lead to violent conflict has received considerable attention and has been extensively argued in the academic literature. This has been to a great extent informed by earlier discussions about environmental security that expanded with the end of the Cold War and the broader redefinition of security that followed. The 1990s witnessed growing interest in the security implications of environmental degradation, as reflected by numerous research projects carried out on the subject. While there was common agreement about the existence of links between environmental change and violent conflict, the early scholarly debate failed to demonstrate that environmental factors are the only, or even the most important, factors leading to conflicts.

Resource Scarcity

Early studies about environmental security were principally focused on discussions about resource scarcity (brought about by environmental degradation) and its contribution to violent conflicts⁶. In particular, the academic literature was shaped by the work of Thomas Homer-Dixon and the so-called Toronto Group⁷. In a series of case studies of developing countries, they explored the relationship between various kinds of environmental stress and violent conflict, arguing that environmental scarcity, although never a sole or sufficient cause, is a factor leading to large-scale migration, deepened poverty, and violence⁸. A 1998 study by Wensche Hauge and Tanja Ellingsen similarly found a significant impact from deforestation, soil degradation, and lack of freshwater access on the occurrence of political violence⁹.

Figure 1: Some Sources and Consequences of Environmental Scarcity



Source: Thomas Homer-Dixon, 'Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence From Cases', Summer 1994, <https://homerdixon.com/evidence-from-cases-full-article/>

6. Jürgen Scheffran et al., *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict - Challenges for Societal Stability*, vol. 8, Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace (Heidelberg: Springer, 2012).

7. Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence Form Cases," Summer 1994,

8. Homer-Dixon, Thomas, "Thomas Homer-Dixon Research," accessed May 26, 2020,

9. Hauge Wensche and Tanja Ellingsen, "Beyond Environmental Scarcity: Causal Pathways to Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. Special Issue on Environmental Conflict (May 1998): 299–317. quoted in Christian Webersik, *Climate Change and Security: A Gathering Storm of Global Challenges* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010).

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the prominence given to the link between resource scarcity and violence in initial studies resulted in “downplaying how localized impacts are connected to global dynamics”, and led to a broader marginalization of the issue of climate change¹⁰. Indeed, in Homer-Dixon’s research, greenhouse-induced climate change is considered as only one type of environmental change identified as a plausible cause of violent intergroup conflict.

The argument that environmental scarcity induces violent conflicts within states has since been widely challenged on various grounds. Empirical research has shown how environmental degradation can in some instances provide an opportunity for cooperation¹¹. Other studies have revealed that it is the abundance of natural resources, rather than their scarcity, that increases the risk of violent conflict, by providing potential rebels with the means to finance their uprisings¹². This idea has also been referred to as “the political resource curse”, pointing to the tendency of regimes that are richly endowed with natural resources to have more authoritarian regimes and to be more prone to civil wars than those without such resources¹³. A number of studies have also found that the link between resource scarcity and conflicts is not a direct one¹⁴. These findings have been accompanied with a growing recognition of the fact that the drivers of violence are most often multi-dimensional and highly contextual. As such, “disputes and grievances over natural resources can contribute to violent conflict when they overlap with other factors”¹⁵.

Vulnerability and Exposure

One reason for the significant disagreement on the matter is that previous studies have focused primarily on establishing (or disproving) causality between climate change and conflict, while neglecting vulnerability and exposure to the impacts of climate hazards¹⁶.

In a literature review on the intersection between climate change and conflict, Joshua Busby maintained that “the literature has now productively turned to studying the indirect pathways and mediating factors between climate and social conflict, including but not limited to armed violence”¹⁷. As a result, the academic debate has recently advanced towards examining the linkages between climate change and other security outcomes and other forms of social contestation. Hence, “different effects of climate change have been suggested as crucial intermediating catalysts of organized violence”¹⁸. Figure 2 provides a synthesis of suggested pathways from climate change to armed conflict.

10. Jürgen Scheffran et al., *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict - Challenges for Societal Stability*, vol. 8, Hexagon Series on Human and Environmental Security and Peace (Heidelberg: Springer, 2012).

11. Aaron Wolf et al., “The Key to Managing Conflict and Cooperation over Water,” January 2013,

12. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “On Economic Causes of Civil War,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 50, no. 4 (1998): 563–73. quoted in Sören Scholvin, *The Geopolitics of Regional Power: Geography, Economics and Politics in Southern Africa, The International Political Economy of New Regionalisms* (Bristol, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2014),

13. Mehrad Vahabi, “A Critical Survey of the Resource Curse Literature through the Appropriability Lens” (CEPN - Centre d’Economie de l’Université Paris Nord, 2017),

14. Philippe Le Billon, “The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts,” *Political Geography* 20, no. 5 (June 2001): 561–84,

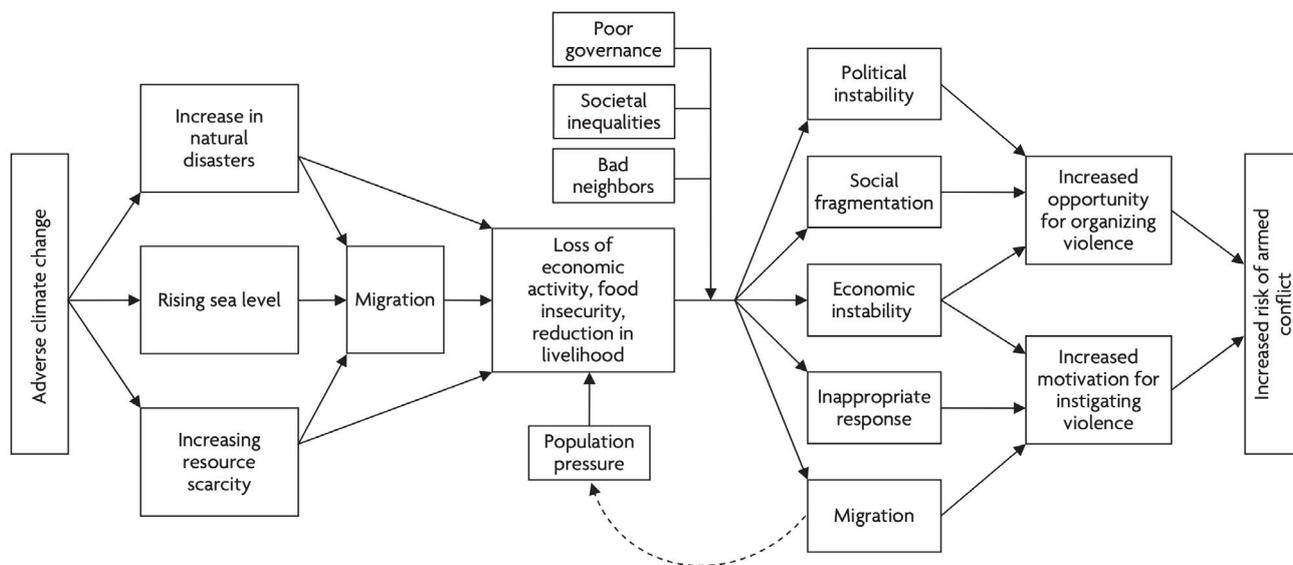
15. The United Nations Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action, “Toolkit and Guidance for Preventing and Managing Land and Natural Resources Conflicts: Renewable Resources and Conflict” (European Union, United Nations, 2012),

16. Carl-Friedrich Schleussner et al., “Armed-Conflict Risks Enhanced by Climate-Related Disasters in Ethnically Fractionalized Countries,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 113, no. 33 (August 16, 2016): 9216–21,

17. Busby, “The Field of Climate and Security: A Scan of the Literature”,

18. Mearns Robin and Andrew Norton, “Social Dimensions of Climate Change Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World,” *New Frontiers of Social Policy* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010),

Figure 2: Possible Pathways from Climate Change to Conflict



Source: Mearns Robin and Andrew Norton, 'Social Dimensions of Climate Change Equity and Vulnerability in a Warming World', New Frontiers of Social Policy (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010).

There has also been an increased focus on examining the impact of climate change from the perspective of human security. This angle has given more attention to the impacts of climate change on human well-being and sustainable development¹⁹. However, a range of objections has been raised against the concept of human security. One is that it downplays security risks and blurs the boundary between human security and human development²⁰.

Environmental Change and Conflicts

In the early 2000s, the academic debate moved on to focus on uncovering the relationship between environmental factors and armed conflicts within states²¹. This prompted studies that sought to delineate the relationship between factors assumed to be strongly influenced by climate change (such as droughts) and conflicts within countries. The effects of climate change appeared especially harmful in vulnerable regions that are already experiencing conflict²². Another study conducted by Burke et al in 2009 established strong historical linkages between civil war and temperature in Africa, with warmer years significantly increasing the likelihood of war²³. However, when states try to make direct links between droughts and violence, it can often be an attempt to generate funding from international institutions and foreign governments.

19. Busby, "The Field of Climate and Security: A Scan of the Literature",

20. Renate Schubert et al., "World in Transition: Climate Change as a Security Risk" (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2008),

21. Joshua Busby, "The Field of Climate and Security: A Scan of the Literature," The Social Science Research Council (SSRC), April 2019,

22. Nina von Uexkull et al., "Civil Conflict Sensitivity to Growing-Season Drought," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 113, no. 44 (n.d.): 12391-12396.,

23. Marshall Burke et al., "Warming Increases the Risk of Civil War in Africa," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 106, no. 49 (December 2009): 20670-20674,

A 2008 report by the German Advisory Council on Global Change²⁴ provided a comprehensive summary of much of the literature and the arguments for and against the climate change-security nexus. According to this study, a review of 73 empirically well-recorded ‘environmental conflicts’ that occurred between 1980 and 2005, showed that they were limited to regional scope and did not present any serious threat to international security²⁵. In the same vein, Nils Petter Gleditsch and Ragnhild Nordås also claimed that it has been difficult to establish general relationships between environmental change and conflict²⁶.

In contrast, others have found that climate change has made conflict more probable than it would be otherwise, because of the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. In an analysis carried out in the early 2010s, Solomon Hsiang and Marshall Burke found “strong support for a causal link between climate change and conflict [...], claiming that each rise in temperature or extreme rainfall by one standard variation increased the frequency of interpersonal violence by 4% and intergroup conflict by 14%”²⁷.

However, unlike the hard science on climate change, most of the literature connecting climate change and violence hasn’t been backed up by peer-reviewed studies²⁸. As such, despite abundant research, the robustness of the empirical findings remains mixed and there is a tendency to oversimplify the link between climate change and violence²⁹. In 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) noted that “collectively the research does not conclude that there is a strong positive relationship between warming and armed conflict”³⁰. In the 2018 Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5°C, the world body for assessing the state of scientific knowledge on climate change recognized that temperature has “a positive and statistically significant effect on outmigration for agriculture-dependent communities”, but called for caution in relating conflict to climate change³¹.

The Climate Change-Fragility Nexus

Studies have also increasingly paid special attention to how climate change and fragility can jointly pose risks, and in what contexts such environmental stresses can lead to conflict. In 2014, G7 members commissioned an international consortium of research institutes to conduct an independent study on climate change and fragility³². The report, *A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks*, explored how climate change impacts puts pressure on states and societies and produce a wide range of fragility risks³³. It identified the following climate-fragility risks: 1)

24. Renate Schubert et al., “World in Transition: Climate Change as a Security Risk” (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2008),

25. Ibid.

26. Nils Petter Gleditsch and Ragnhild Nordås, “Climate Change and Conflict: A Critical Overview,” *Die Friedens-Warte* 84, no. 2 (2009): 11–28.

27. “How Climate Change Can Fuel Wars,” *The Economist*, May 23, 2019,

28. Gleditsch and Nordås, “Climate Change and Conflict: A Critical Overview,” 11–28

29. Kendra Sakaguchi, Anil M. Varughese, and Graeme Auld, “Climate Wars? A Systematic Review of Empirical Analyses on the Links between Climate Change and Violent Conflict,” *International Studies Review* 19, no. 4 (December 2017): 622–45,

30. IPCC. “Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.” (IPCC, 2014) quoted in Stephane Hallegatte et al., “Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty” (World Bank, 2016),

31. IPCC. “Global warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.” (IPCC, 2018).

32. Thomas Diez, Franziskus von Lucke, and Zehra Wellmann, *The Securitisation of Climate Change: Actors, Processes and Consequences*, *New Security Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

33. Lukas Rüttinger et al., “A New Climate for Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks” (adelphi, International Alert, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015),

Local resource competition, 2) Livelihood insecurity and migration, 3) Extreme weather events and disasters, 4) Volatile food prices and provision, 5) Transboundary water management, 6) Sea level rise and coastal degradation, and 7) The unintended consequences of climate action³⁴. The G7 also formed a working group to follow up on the recommendations in the report in order to integrate climate-fragility considerations into their planning.

Today, consensus is growing around a more moderate view that climate change is exacerbating already existing vulnerabilities, rather than being an inevitable cause of insecurity. In the words of the United Nations Development Program, “the pathways through which these risks manifest are highly contextual and determined by the localized interplay of climatic hazards, the parameters of exposure, and, most importantly, the vulnerability and coping capacity of states and societies”³⁵.

34 Ibid.

35 “Supporting Climate Security,” United Nations Development Program, accessed May 26, 2020,

Part 2: The Theory Behind the Securitization of Climate Change

The evolution of the concept of environmental security took place within the larger context of the reframing of the security discourse³⁶.

The Climate-Security Link: Theoretical Frameworks

During the Cold War period, security was primarily viewed through the lens of protecting states' sovereignty from external military threats. Realists, who framed security as the preservation of nations' integrity in the face of external threats in an anarchic world system, placed the environment within "the realm of low politics"³⁷. The end of the Cold War ushered in growing recognition of the need to address global threats with uncertain impacts that affect not only nation states, but also the livelihoods and health of communities and individuals³⁸. This led to the widening of the security agenda to non-traditional threats, including their economic and environmental aspects. Given the dominant focus on violent conflict and cross-border invasions, the discussions about whether and how climate change fuels conflicts or drives migration were crucial to framing it as a security threat.

Constructivist scholars challenged this narrow perspective of security, arguing instead that threats are socially constructed. The Copenhagen School of international relations places particular emphasis on including non-military threats that affect people, and not only states. Understood as a synthesis of constructivist and classical political realism³⁹, the theory of securitization developed by the Copenhagen School contributed to the widening of the security agenda in the post-Cold War era⁴⁰. It argues that there are no such things as "objective threats" and instead that "various issues can be transformed into security issues" when successfully depicted as existential threats by securitizing actors⁴¹. This helps explain why environmental issues were excluded from the security tradition and only became "legitimate security concerns" when they could be framed as possible triggers of conflict or as having consequences comparable to those of wars⁴². According to the Copenhagen School, it is precisely "that special nature of security threats which justifies extraordinary measures to handle them"⁴³.

36. Georgios Koukos, "Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change," Lund University (2019),

37. Maria Julia Trombetta, "Environmental Security and Climate Change: Analysing the Discourse," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 2008): 585–602,

38. Daniel Heffron, "What Do Realists Think about Climate Change?," *Centre For Geopolitics & Security in Realism Studies*, 2015,

39. Úrsula Oswald Spring, *Earth at Risk in the 21st Century: Rethinking Peace, Environment, Gender, and Human, Water, Health, Food, Energy Security, and Migration*, vol. 18, *Pioneers in Arts, Humanities, Science, Engineering, Practice* (Springer International Publishing, 2020),

40. Rens van Munster, "Securitization," *Oxford Bibliographies International Relations* (June 26, 2012),

41. Trombetta, "Environmental Security and Climate Change", 585–602,

42. Scheffran et al., *Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict*,

43. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Pub, 1998) quoted in Georgios Koukos, "Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change," Lund University (2019),

The Securitization of Climate Change

In one of the earliest attempts to securitize the environment, Robert Falk spoke in 1971 about the “need to revamp our entire concept of national security and economic growth if we are to solve the problems of environmental decay”⁴⁴. In *Redefining National Security*, Lester Brown further explored some of the links between climate change and security. He identified four systems under stress: fisheries, grasslands, forests, and croplands⁴⁵.

The securitization of climate change has significant implications for how the issue is addressed, at both the national and international policy levels⁴⁶. By upgrading environmental concerns to the status of security threats, some scholars hoped to push environmental degradation to the top of the global agenda⁴⁷. Others warned that linking environment to security could have counter-productive effects and could lead to “an undesirable militarization of the environment”⁴⁸.

While a strict interpretation of the theory of securitization would suggest that “climate change has not been successfully securitized because emergency measures have not been adopted”, some scholars claim that one can still speak of securitization since a growing number of countries and key institutions have accepted climate change as a security threat and, in some instances, have even formally incorporated it into their security policies⁴⁹.

44. Peter Hough, *Environmental Security: An Introduction*. (New York: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2014),

45. Alan Collins, ed., *Contemporary Security Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

46. Georgios Koukos, “Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change,” Lund University (2019),

47. Hayley Stevenson, *Global Environmental Politics: Problems, Policy and Practice* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

48. Georgios Koukos, “Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change,” Lund University (2019),

49. Ibid.

Part 3: Growing International Political Momentum for the Climate-Security Nexus

Over time, it has become clear that climate change poses multiple and overlapping security challenges, including to water and food supplies, and in terms of livelihood insecurity, disruption to agriculture and energy infrastructure, social tensions, conflict and displacement⁵⁰.

Historical Background

Building on this academic interest, environmental concerns officially entered the international political agenda with the organization of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) in Stockholm in 1972 and the subsequent founding of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The landmark Brundtland Report of 1987 (formerly known as *Our Common Future*) is typically cited as “the genesis of environmental security concepts”⁵¹ and marks the beginning of the official use of the term ‘environmental security’⁵². Likewise, the 1988 World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere made clear links between a changing atmosphere and a changing security landscape⁵³. International political momentum culminated in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 43/53 calling for the creation of an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988, and the subsequent establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The UN 1994 Human Development Report also identified climate change as a threat to human security⁵⁴.

In 2007, climate change started being cast as a threat to international peace and security. The IPCC released its fourth Assessment Report⁵⁵ and UNEP published a report arguing that “the conflict in Darfur has been driven by climate change and environmental degradation”⁵⁶. At the initiative of the United Kingdom—which had just commissioned the influential Stern Review on the economics of climate change—the UN Security Council (UNSC) held its first debate on climate change and its implications for international security (followed on two more occasions in 2011 and 2018). Also in 2007, high-ranking retired U.S. generals published a report dubbing climate change a serious threat to the security of the United States⁵⁷.

Recent Developments

The recognition of climate change as a security risk is now well established at the international policy level. The UN General Assembly recognized the possible security implications of climate change

50. Katie Peters and Leigh Mayhew, “Climate Change, Conflict and Security Scan” (Overseas Development Institute, June 2018),

51. Tyler H. Lippert, “NATO, Climate Change, and International Security: A Risk Governance Approach,” RAND, 2016,

52. Jon Barnett, *The Meaning of Environmental Security: Ecological Politics and Policy in the New Security Era* (New York: Zed Books, 2001).

53. Caitlin Werrell and Francesco Femia, “Climate and Security Time Machine,” The Center for Climate & Security (blog), December 6, 2018,

54. United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report 1994*, Human Development Report (United Nations, 1994),

55. IPCC, *Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC, 2007) quoted in Georgios Koukos, “Securitizing the Environment? A Discourse Analysis of Key United Nations Documents on Climate Change,” Lund University (2019),

56. Julian Borger, “Darfur Conflict Heralds Era of Wars Triggered by Climate Change,” *The Guardian*, June 23, 2007,

57. Military Advisory Board, “National Security and the Threat of Climate Change” (The CNA Corporation, 2007),

in 2009 in resolution 63/281⁵⁸. The Security Council also made progress in integrating language on climate-related security risks, despite initial reservations⁵⁹. The ongoing Syrian conflict has also drawn attention to the question of how climatic conditions can contribute to political unrest and civil war⁶⁰. During its fourth meeting discussing the relationship between global security and climate change in January 2019, countries called on the UN to “establish a system to alert the world to regions where conflicts may be inflamed by climate change”⁶¹.

African leaders have also increasingly paid special attention to climate-related security risks. The 2014 African Union (AU) Strategy on Climate Change recognized that “the existing pressures on natural resources that are becoming scarce in the face of climate change and growing population could lead to insecurity and conflicts undermining peace in Africa”⁶². A May 2020 report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute examining the AU’s policy landscape found that “the discourse around climate security within the AU is vibrant and rapidly developing”⁶³. In particular, the African Union increasingly recognizes the security risks associated with climate change in the areas of food security, peace and security, human security, and energy and natural resource management security work⁶⁴.

58. Jake Sherman, “How Can the Security Council Engage on Climate Change, Peace, and Security?,” International Peace Institute Global Observatory (blog), June 20, 2019,

59. Ibid.

60. Guy J. Abel et al., “Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration,” *Global Environmental Change* 54 (January 2019): 239–49,

61. Karl Mathiesen and Nathalie Sauer, “UN Security Council Members Mount New Push to Address Climate Threat,” *Climate Home News*, January 25, 2019,

62. African Union, “Draft African Union Strategy on Climate Change,” May 2014,

63. Vane Moraa Aminga, “Policy Responses to Climate-Related Security Risks: The African Union” (SIPRI, May 2020),

64. Ibid.

Part 4: Case study: The Lake Chad Basin

The Lake Chad Basin is one of the places where climate change has been identified as an important driver of armed conflict. Since 2009, what began as a conflict between the Nigerian state and the violent extremist group Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria has spread to neighboring Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, while a new group known as the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) has also emerged⁶⁵. The deteriorating insecurity captured international attention in 2014 with the kidnapping of more than 270 young girls by Boko Haram. Today, Boko Haram and ISWAP are more present around Lake Chad than ever before, and they continue to terrorize the area despite ongoing security and development efforts. Consequently, hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to abandon their homes, making it one of the worst humanitarian crises in history: 3.6 million people in Lake Chad Basin are food insecure⁶⁶, 2.5 million people have been displaced⁶⁷, and almost 10 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance to survive⁶⁸. National, regional, and international actors are struggling to come up with sustainable solutions to address the root causes of the conflict, while the debate around climate change has also been gaining momentum. This section will attempt to illustrate how climate change has been acting as threat multiplier by exacerbating interacting conflict drivers in the Lake Chad Basin.

Making Sense of the Lake Chad Crises and the Climate Change Narrative

At times described as “the forgotten crisis”⁶⁹ and sometimes as “one of the worst humanitarian disasters”⁷⁰ since World War II, the Lake Chad Basin is facing multidimensional and interlinked challenges. The emergence of Boko Haram and growing insecurity in northeastern Nigeria was a result of years of poor governance and a decline in the government’s legitimacy and capability to govern. Like many countries in the region, Nigeria has been struggling to provide basic services, including healthcare, education, and security, to communities living beyond urban centers, mainly in the north. The feelings among the youth of inequality, marginalization, lack of economic development, and frustration, played a key role in Boko Haram’s emergence in 2009⁷¹. Since 2015, the insurgent group has expanded its operations and violent attacks from northeastern Nigeria into Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. As of today, there are two distinct groups rather than one, and violence is ongoing. The expansion of instability is mainly the result of drivers indicated above, in addition to recent increases in human rights violations and extrajudicial killings by security forces in the name of fighting terrorism. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have documented and reported such acts widely perpetrated by Nigerian, Nigerien, Chadian, and Cameroonian security forces⁷².

The conflict in the Lake Chad Basin has attracted interest from multiple organizations to understand the conflict drivers and ability of Boko Haram and subsequently ISWAP to recruit. Building upon

65. MSF International, “Lake Chad Crisis in Depth,” Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) International, accessed May 26, 2020,

66. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), “Lake Chad Basin: Humanitarian Snapshot”, April 27, 2020,

67. Ibid.

68. USAID. “Lake Chad Basin Factsheet,” January 2020,

69. “Lake Chad Basin Crisis - Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad,” ShelterBox, accessed May 26, 2020,

70. Raquel Munayer and Stella Schaller, “Lake Chad Crisis - Knowledge Hub,” Adelphi, A New Climate for Peace, August 20, 2018,

71. “Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency”. International Crisis Group, 3 April 2014.

72. “Fighting Boko Haram in Chad: Beyond Military Measures”. International Crisis Group, March 2017.

the G7 commissioned report of 2014, the Climate Fragility Risk Assessment of Lake Chad⁷³ made recommendations to policymakers and donors engaged in the region. Following the 2017 Oslo Humanitarian Summit on Nigeria and the Lake Chad region⁷⁴, UN Security Council Resolution 2349 on the situation in the Lake Chad Basin region acknowledged that “climate change was shaping the peace and security landscape in the area”⁷⁵. In 2016, Mercy Corps conducted a study and interviewed former Boko Haram members to try to identify the reasons for joining the group⁷⁶. According to key findings, “almost all former members cited a friend, family member, or business colleague as a factor in their joining Boko Haram. That person’s influence in the youth’s life mattered more than the number of people in a youth’s network who joined.” Other reasons highlighted included economic gain and frustration with the government. Another study in 2018 by Equal Access International indicated similar drivers, in addition to forced recruitment⁷⁷. Amnesty International in March 2020 published a report highlighting forced recruitment by Boko Haram in areas in Nigeria where the state is willingly or unwillingly incapable of protecting its citizens⁷⁸. To summarize, Omar S. Mahmood put it as follow: “no single factor explains the emergence and rise of Boko Haram in the region”⁷⁹. However, the factors enabling its rise include: “a limited state presence and poor governance, underdevelopment and unemployment, environmental pressures enhanced by the receding waters of Lake Chad and desertification, and a deep history of Islamic conservatism”⁸⁰.

Simultaneously, there have been attempts to connect the increased instability in the region and expansion of terrorist groups to the shrinking of Lake Chad and the challenges associated with access to water. Lake Chad shrunk by 90% between the 1960s and the 1990s with significant impacts on the region. In fact, according to satellite analysis, the lake has grown since the 1990s⁸¹. But the dominant narrative surrounding the crisis is that the vanishing lake has fueled violence by pushing farmers and fishermen to take up arms⁸². In the same vein, Ashafa (2018) found that the drying of Lake Chad has contributed to economic hardship, which has bred tension and resentment, leading to the recruitment of youths as fighters⁸³. Other studies claimed violent extremist organizations, including Boko Haram around the Lake Chad, exploit stress resulting from lack of access to water in order to recruit members⁸⁴. However, groups responsible for violence in the region have emerged in areas rather far from the Lake Chad and focus on governance and inequality issues rather than climate change.

Increased violence in the region coincided with the shrinking of Lake Chad, which is helpful as support for the argument about a direct link between conflicts and climate change⁸⁵. However, such

73. “Lake Chad Risk Assessment Project,” Adelphi, accessed May 26, 2020,

74. On this occasion, \$672 million were pledged in relief aid.

75. Camilla Born, Karolina Eklöw, and Malin Mobjörk, “Advancing United Nations Responses to Climate-Related Security Risks” (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), September 2019),

76. Mercy Corps, “Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of Former Boko Haram Combatants and Nigerian Youth,” April 2016,

77. Equal Access International (EQI), “We Were Changing the World: Radicalization and Empowerment Among Young People Associated with Armed Opposition Groups in Northeast Nigeria,” October 2018,

78. Amnesty International, “We Dried Our Tears: Addressing the Toll on Children of Northeast Nigeria’s Conflict,” May 2020,

79. Omar S. Mahmood and Christian Ani Ndubuisi, “Responses to Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Region: Policies, Cooperation and Livelihoods,” (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), July 2018),

80. Ibid.

81. Janani Vivekananda et al., ‘Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region’ (Adelphi, 2019).

82. Oli Brown and Janani Vivekananda, “Lake Chad Shrinking? It’s a Story That Masks Serious Failures of Governance,” The Guardian (blog), October 22, 2019,

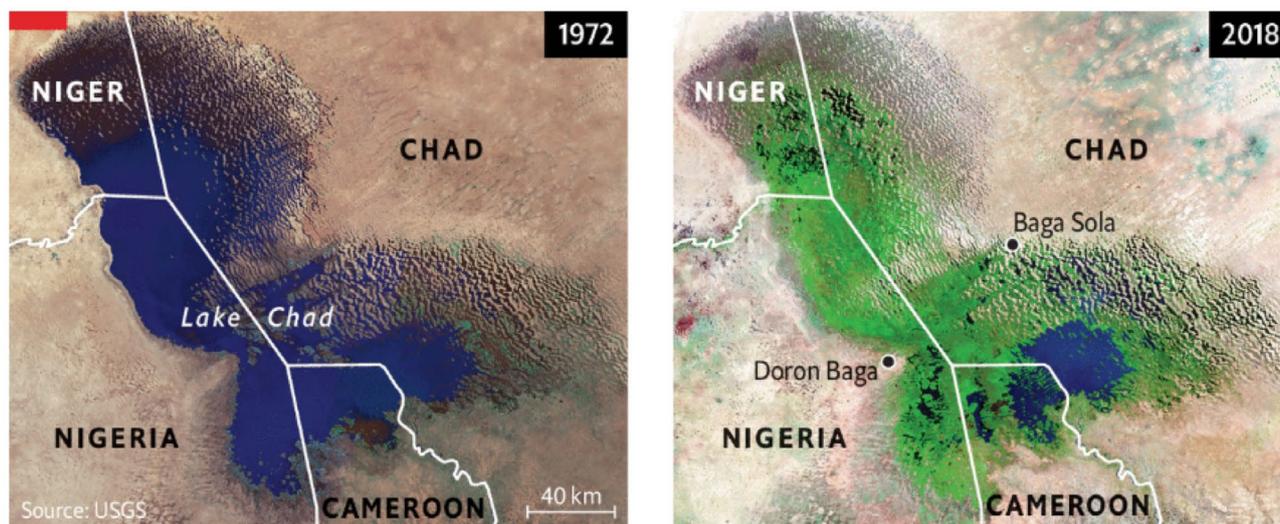
83. Katie Peters and Leigh Mayhew, “Climate Change, Conflict and Security Scan” (Overseas Development Institute, June 2018),

84. Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), “The Role of Water in Instability and Conflict,” December 2017,

85. Laurence Caramel, “Changement Climatique et Pression Démographique, Terreau de la Violence au Sahel”, Le Monde, 11 April 2019

arguments are often framed to instigate interest from the international community and raise funds. More importantly, they provide leaders with a convenient excuse to blame ongoing violence on external and powerful factors like climate change, instead of assuming responsibility and addressing the root causes of conflicts, such as governance, corruption, inequality, and marginalization⁸⁶.

Figure 3: Shrinking of the Lake Chad Basin



The Economist

Source: 'How Climate Change Can Fuel Wars', The Economist, May 23, 2019.

Unpacking Scientific Research on Climate Change and Lake Chad Conflict

Research conducted by Adelphi in May 2019 similarly demonstrates that the size of the lake has historically fluctuated and has on average remained stable since the 1990s. This finding has important implications for making sense of the dynamics between climate and security risks within the region. An Expert Working Group on Climate-related Security Risks⁸⁷ initiated during Sweden's membership of the UN Security Council (2017-18) conducted research on climate-related security risks in the Lake Chad region. It identified the following four risks: 1) amplified livelihood insecurity, 2) diminished coping capacities due to conflict, leading to increased vulnerability to climate risks, 3) intensified and increased incidences of natural resource conflicts, 4) increased recruitment into armed groups due to livelihood insecurity.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) recently developed a five-year stabilization strategy known as the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin. It recognizes that "three separate but inter-related and mutually reinforcing crises have converged" in the Lake Chad Basin. These three crises relate to 1) a structural and persistent development deficit; 2) a breakdown of the social contract that has manifested in lawlessness and violent extremist insurgency; and 3) an unfolding environmental disaster⁸⁸.

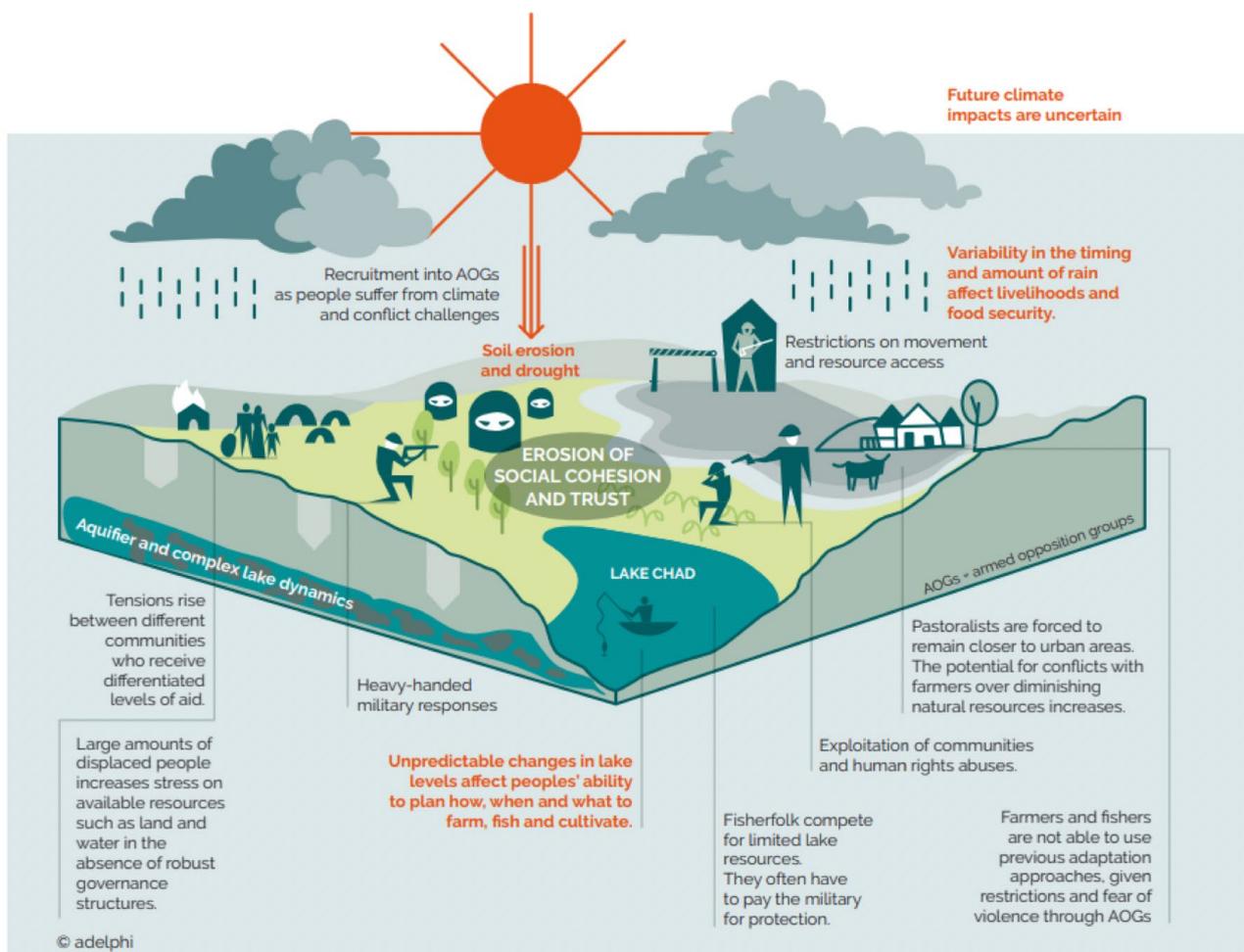
86. ICG, "The Central Sahel: Scene of New Climate Wars?" 24 April 2020,

87. Janani Vivekananda and Camilla Born, "Climate-Related Security Risk Assessment in the Lake Chad Region" (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, July 2018),

88. Lake Chad Basin Commission, "Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram Affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region," August 2018,

The comprehensive report *Shoring Up Stability: Addressing Climate & Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region*⁸⁹, published in May 2019, showed that the relationship between climate change and conflict is in fact a two-way street: “climate change and conflict dynamics interact in a vicious circle, where climate change impacts feed additional pressures and tensions while conflict undermines communities’ abilities to cope and adapt”. The report also confirms that the conflict around Lake Chad has many causes besides climate variability.

Figure 4: How Climate Change Interacts with Different Conflict Drivers



Source: Janani Vivekananda et al., ‘Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region’ (Adelphi, 2019).

The next section describes how climate change interacts with different conflict drivers in the Lake Chad region, namely livelihood insecurity, weak governance, poverty and underdevelopment, and migration.

Poverty, Livelihood Insecurity and Demographics

The Lake Chad region is characterized by low socio-economic development indicators, with health, education, basic public social services, and infrastructure lagging far behind the national averages

89. Janani Vivekananda et al., “Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region” (Adelphi, 2019),

in each of its four countries⁹⁰. This under-development has been a source of grievance, spurring escalating social tensions and increased risk of violent conflict.

About 40 million people in the Lake Chad region depend on the lake for crop and livestock farming, fishing, and trade⁹¹. According to Adelphi, the unpredictability caused by climate change (namely high levels of rainfall and wide temperature variability) is toughening economic conditions, with major implications for food security. “The resulting uncertainty means that those who depend on the lake no longer know what to plant and when, and when to switch from one livelihood to another”⁹².

Indeed, climate change is affecting the availability of freshwater, grazing lands, fish stocks, and vegetation that 80% of the population relying on agriculture and pastoral activities depend on as their main sources of income⁹³. Furthermore, the need to adapt to a changing climate has undermined traditional natural resource management and the resilience of transhumance systems⁹⁴ because farmers must now adapt to different growing seasons while herders try to move their cattle to capture variations in forage and water availability⁹⁵.

As these different groups (herders and farmers) compete to secure scarce resources, social tensions escalate and the risk of violent conflict increases⁹⁶. In 2018, more than 1800 deaths across the continent were attributed to transhumance-related conflicts⁹⁷. A study exploring how violence escalated between newly arrived herders and host farmers in Nigeria has found that the long-term causes of the conflict can be traced back to “inadequate grazing reserve and stock routes, changes in land tenure system, insufficient legislation pastoralism, expansion in agricultural policies, economic factors and climate change”⁹⁸. Furthermore, inter-communal tensions and heightened violence in relation to access to resources led to the emergence of stigmatization and rivalry over the control of economic activities and land ownership⁹⁹.

Another important element is demographics. Having quadrupled since the 1960s¹⁰⁰, the population of the Lake Chad Basin is putting increasing pressure on limited farmland and water resources, which in turn poses enormous challenges for local economies¹⁰¹. The loss of traditional livelihoods stretches the coping capacities of these communities and increases their “propensity to explore alternative livelihoods, including violent extremism”¹⁰². By undermining already fragile economies and livelihoods,

90. Amali Tower, “The Nexus Between Climate Change, Displacement and Security in the Lake Chad Basin” (Climate Refugees, September 2017),

91. Peyton, “Climate Change Pushes Farmers to ‘tipping Point’ near Lake Chad,” Thomas Reuters Foundation News (blog), May 15, 2019,

92. Janani Vivekananda et al., “Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region” (Adelphi, 2019),

93. “Sahel & Lake Chad EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa,” European Commission,

94. “How Climate Change Can Fuel Wars,” *The Economist*, May 23, 2019,

95. “How Climate Change Can Fuel Wars,” *The Economist*, May 23, 2019,

96. “Lake Chad Risk Assessment: The Role of Climate Change in the Current Crisis,” Adelphi,

97. Vane Moraa Aminga, “Policy Responses to Climate-Related Security Risks: The African Union” (SIPRI, May 2020),

98. H. J. Ahmadu, “Farmer-Herder Conflict: Exploring the Causes and Management Approaches in the Lake Chad Region Nigeria” (Universiti Utara Malaysia, 2011),

99. “Within and Beyond Borders: Tracking Displacement in the Lake Chad Basin Regional Displacement and Human Mobility Analysis” (International Organization for Migration (IOM), March 2019),

100. “From Crisis to Development around Lake Chad Strategy for an Integrated, Holistic and Sustainable Response” (United Nations Population Fund West and Central Africa Regional Office, July 2017),

101. The local population around the lake grew fast as a result of the drought-related in migration and lower levels of child mortality. Source: Janani Vivekananda et al., “Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region” (Adelphi, 2019),

102. “Supporting Livelihoods in the Lake Chad Basin: Ways Forward for Conflict-Affected Communities in Nigeria, Niger, and Chad,” Oxfam, March 2018,

climate change compounds this security risk.

Weak State Presence and Legitimacy

The way in which climate change interacts with violent conflict depends on the ability of governments to respond to stress. Governance structures and processes are therefore key mediating factors for the security implications of climate-related risks. Indeed, according to Aaron Wolf, “conflict is most likely when the change outpaces institutional capacity to adapt”¹⁰³.

In many places around the Lake Chad region, “the State is effectively absent, or maintains very weak presence” while people’s trust in government is very low¹⁰⁴. The limited infrastructure limits the extent to which the government’s presence is felt, particularly in the borderlands and islands in and around the Lake. The lack of, and limited access to, basic service provision has increased the perception of marginalization and neglect, created pockets of fragility, led to the breakdown of the social contract, and left people in some areas isolated and vulnerable to recruitment by violent groups. According to a discussion paper on Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin, there is a need to re-establish and rebuild public services to make them more functional and easily available to communities¹⁰⁵.

Violent extremist groups seek to fill this gap by offering financial incentives and income-generating opportunities to potential recruits. “ISWAP controls trade, imposes taxes and facilitates agricultural and piscicultural livelihoods to increase its support” in exchange for a range of services to secure its position¹⁰⁶. According to Malik Samuel, “economic viability and control is as important to extremist groups’ resilience as military tactics or ideology”¹⁰⁷.

The root causes of the deteriorating security situation in the Lake Chad Basin can also be found in “divisive reforms and weak governance in the region, coupled with rising inequality and dismay at corruption among the ruling elite”¹⁰⁸. Indeed, on various occasions, corrupt practices have been reported at border crossings, while security personnel were blamed for involvement in drug trafficking¹⁰⁹. In addition, persistent human rights violations by governments and armed groups have contributed to deepening of mistrust and have created an environment in which joining non-state actors, including Boko Haram and ISWAP, can start to seem attractive.

The intensifying religious fundamentalism and the rise of armed militancy is taking place in the context of a power vacuum and a perceived lack of state legitimacy. By occupying dozens of Lake Chad island villages, ISWAP has set up state-like structures in north-east Nigeria¹¹⁰.

103. How Climate Change Can Fuel Wars,” The Economist, May 23, 2019,

104. Lake Chad Basin Commission, “Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram Affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region,” August 2018,

105. UNDP, “Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin,” UNDP, May 2018,

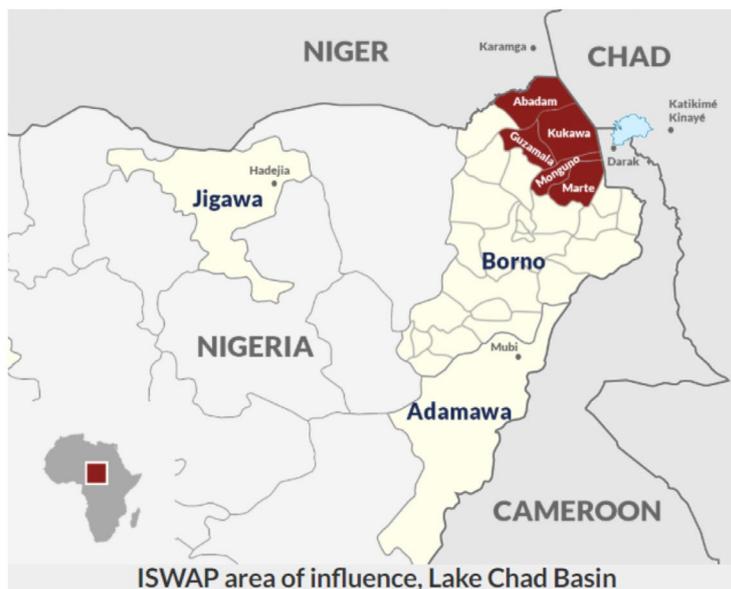
106. Malik Samuel, “Economics of Terrorism in Lake Chad Basin,” Institute for Security Studies, July 10, 2019,

107. Ibid.

108. Nathalie Sauer, “Lake Chad Not Shrinking, but Climate Is Fueling Terror Groups: Report,” Climate Home News, May 16, 2019,

109. UNDP, “Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin,” UNDP, May 2018,

110. Malik Samuel, “Economics of Terrorism in Lake Chad Basin,” Institute for Security Studies, July 10, 2019,

Figure 5: ISWAP's Area of Influence in the Lake Chad Basin

Source: Malik Samuel, 'Economics of Terrorism in Lake Chad Basin', Institute for Security Studies, July 10, 2019.

In addition, governments around the Lake Chad Region have also been unable to address effectively the different risks facing the region. Measures implemented in the affected areas have not addressed the root causes of the crisis¹¹¹ and, at times, were perceived as “arbitrary and inconsistent”¹¹². Some security restrictions (such as constraints on the use of two-wheeled motorcycles, bans on the trade of certain commodities like fish or pepper)¹¹³ have even had the opposite effects by negatively affecting people’s livelihoods. In particular, restrictions on mobility had unintended effects on already fragile local livelihoods in the Lake Chad region. Rural communities have been further disadvantaged by the restrictions imposed on the amount of land that can be used for farming and agricultural production¹¹⁴.

Finally, the March 2020 declaration of war zone in the Lake Chad region by the Chadian government, along with the measures taken by governments of the region to limit the spread of COVID-19, will likely add to the already difficult conditions of the most vulnerable¹¹⁵. The closing of all borders and points of entry into the region has left most of the displaced populations with limited access to basic amenities and food items. With the wet season starting in May-June, government measures, such as the closure of borders and markets, will impact transhumance flows, hindering herders from accessing grain supplies for their cattle and from selling their goods—with direct impacts on food and nutrition security in the region¹¹⁶.

111. “Session Report from the 2019 Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development,” May 2019,

112. Omar Mahmood, “Cost of Counter-Terrorism for Civilians in Lake Chad Countries,” Institute for Security Studies (blog), July 16, 2018,

113. Ibid.

114. UNDP, “Perspectives from Local Communities on Stabilization and Building Peace in the Lake Chad Basin,” UNDP, May 2018,

115. “Background Brief on the Sahel and Lake Chad Amid Covid-19 Crisis” (International Organization for Migration (IOM), April 2020),

116. Ibid.

Migration and Displacement

In the past, the Lake Chad Basin was a region characterized by thriving cross-border movements of people, goods, and commodities. However, migration patterns shifted when climate change started to severely impact livelihood opportunities in the region and violence committed by non-state armed groups increased¹¹⁷. In the 1970s and 1980s, as the drought hit central regions, people migrated towards the lake¹¹⁸. But since the rise of Boko Haram in 2009 and the escalation of attacks in north-eastern Nigeria in 2014, various population movements have been observed, including in the form of forced displacement¹¹⁹, as well as evacuation and relocation¹²⁰.

The crisis has severely hit the most vulnerable people, namely refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs)¹²¹ and children¹²². According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), over 2.7 million people have fled their homes in the Lake Chad Basin. They are currently under physical and emotional strain, lacking shelter, food, and adequate access to clean water, hygiene, and basic sanitation—all of which makes them more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic¹²³.

The IOM's Regional Office for West and Central Africa report *Tracking Displacement And Human Mobility In The Lake Chad Basin*, published in March 2019, revealed that over 80% of the displaced population resides in Nigeria¹²⁴. People displaced within their own countries make up half of the total displaced population, while returnees account for 40%¹²⁵. According to the study, the main reason for displacement is the conflict. The great majority (94%) of individuals in the Lake Chad Basin were displaced because of the highly volatile security situation in the three countries (Cameroon, Nigeria, and Chad), while 5% were displaced because of community clashes, and less than 1% fled for reasons related to climate change and natural disaster¹²⁶.

The evidence from the literature on conflict and migration suggests that countries that experience different types of violent conflict tend to have higher outmigration and refugee flows, and that violence serves as a main push factor in the case of forced migration¹²⁷. But while conflict remains the main

117. "Within and Beyond Borders: Tracking Displacement in the Lake Chad Basin Regional Displacement and Human Mobility Analysis" (International Organization for Migration (IOM), March 2019),

118. Since the contraction in the lake's size during the drought actually increased the amount of available productive land, this move was beneficial for those who sought water, pasture and fertile farmland, particularly in Niger and Chad. Source: Janani Vivekananda et al., "Shoring Up Stability – Addressing Climate and Fragility Risks in the Lake Chad Region" (Adelphi, 2019),

119. Forced displacement occurs when individuals and communities have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of, armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters. Source: Regional Protection Working Group (RPWG), "Typology of Movements in the Lake Chad Basin and Voluntariness Verification Tool of Return Movements," 2017,

120. Initiated either by the government for imperative military reasons, by humanitarian organizations or jointly by both. Source: Ibid.

121. IDPs are persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

122. Regional Protection Working Group (RPWG), "Typology of Movements in the Lake Chad Basin and Voluntariness Verification Tool of Return Movements," 2017,

123. UNOCHA, "Lake Chad Basin: Humanitarian Snapshot", April 27, 2020,

124. "Within and Beyond Borders: Tracking Displacement in the Lake Chad Basin Regional Displacement and Human Mobility Analysis" (International Organization for Migration (IOM), March 2019),

125. Ibid.

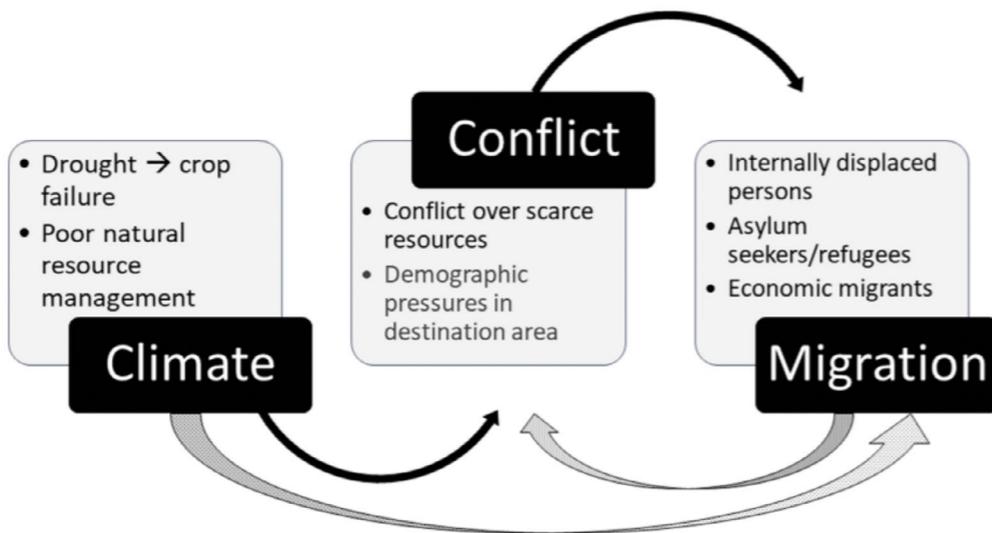
126. These numbers are based on an information management system (known as DTM) which regularly captures, processes and disseminates multi-layered information on the mobility, locations, vulnerabilities and needs of displaced populations throughout the course of a crisis. The data in the study is collated from the three DTM exercises collected in Cameroon (September 2018), Chad (November 2018) and Nigeria (October 2018).

127. Guy J. Abel et al., "Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration," *Global Environmental Change* 54 (January 2019): 239–49,

driver of displacement in the Lake Chad Basin, the relationship is also a reverse one: the increase in the number of migrants also contributes to conflict in migrant-receiving areas.

In addition, other well-documented drivers of migration—including those relating to climate change—interact with and reinforce each other. Figure 6 presents an attempt at modeling the relationship between climate, conflict and migration, with possible reverse causations depicted by grey arrows.

Figure 6: A Conceptual Model of Climate, Conflict and Migration



Source: Guy J. Abel et al., 'Climate, Conflict and Forced Migration', *Global Environmental Change* 54 (January 2019): 239–49.

Conclusion

When conflicts overlap with climate-related shocks, we often witness an increased ‘securitization’ in the discourse about climate. Our literature review and close examination of the climate-security nexus has showed how climate change can act as a threat multiplier by exacerbating livelihood insecurity, weak governance systems, and migration, but also that the drivers of violence are multi-dimensional and highly contextual.

There is no doubt that tackling global warming is an indisputable moral imperative and that climate change represents a significant threat to the Lake Chad region. However blaming climate change for ongoing instability and conflicts can be misleading. Indeed, the securitization of climate change is shifting attention away from governments, which should be held accountable and which should address pressing governance challenges that have caused vulnerability in the first place and contributed to the rise of violent extremist organizations.

Because of the unstable situation it appears unlikely that comprehensive humanitarian efforts will return to the area in the near future, especially in the most-affected communities. An immediate focus should be addressing the dire humanitarian situation in the area. Simultaneously, the permanent return of the state and the provision of basic public services should be integral parts of any current and upcoming strategy, whether at national, regional, or international level. This would help create a safer space for local communities to return and practice their economic activities. Most importantly, it would help gradually re-establish a relationship of trust between local communities and the state, which would be a key element in stabilization of the area.

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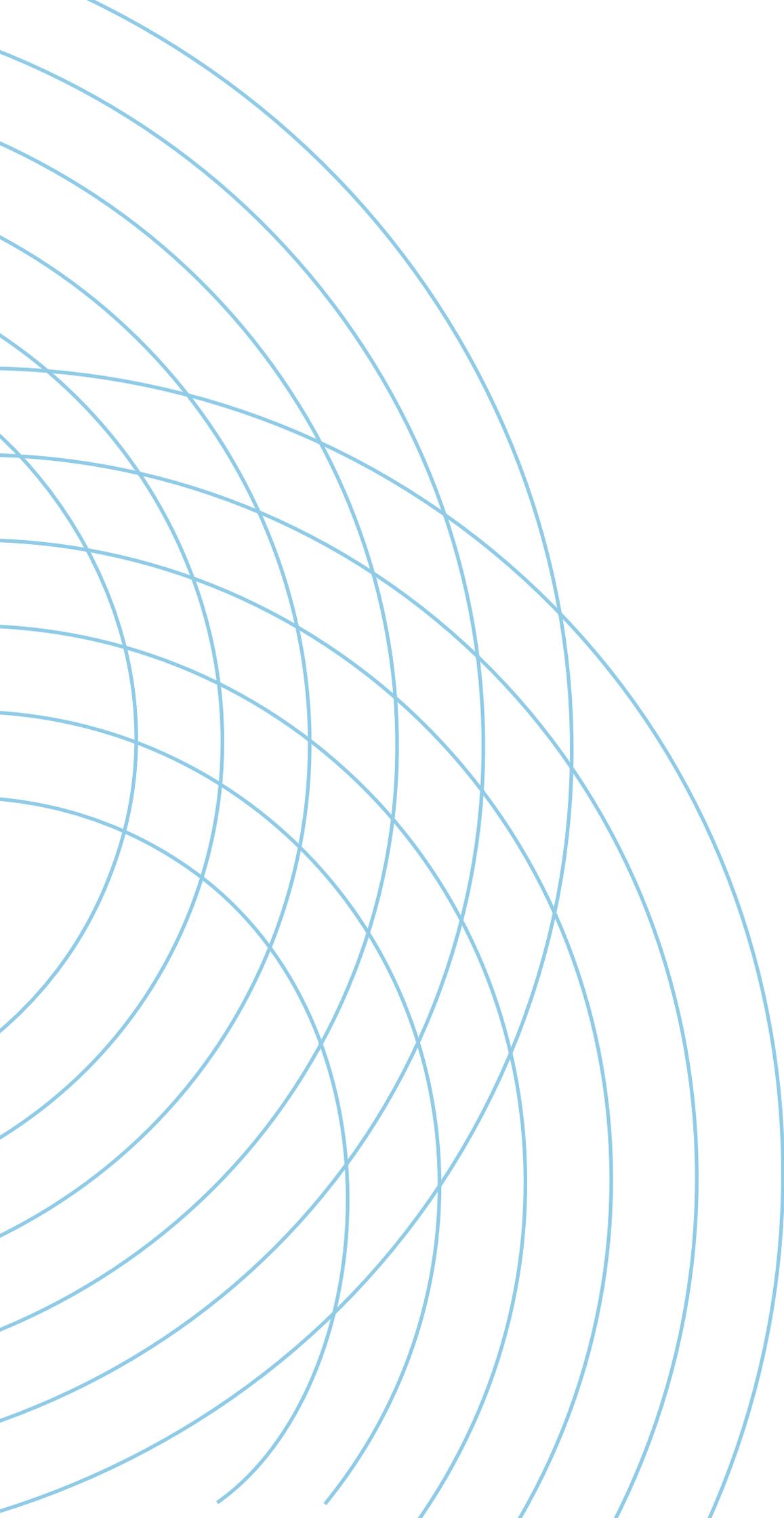
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