

ANNEX 1

DARFUR, SUDAN: CLIMATIC DRIVERS OF CONFLICT

1. The Darfur conflict began in 2003 between Sudanese Government forces, backed by allied militia known as Janjaweed, and Darfur rebel movements. Hundreds of thousands were killed, while scores more were displaced.¹ The ICC has been formally investigating the situation in Darfur since 2005—as a *threat to international peace and security*—pursuant to a Security Council resolution.² Notably, the investigation was triggered by (among other things) initial estimates of massive population disruptions as well as large-scale village destruction. The allegations include genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur since July 2002.³
2. At the confirmation of charges hearing on 25 May 2020, victim representative Paolina Massidda provided a useful framing of the issue: ‘There was indeed frequent friction between the settled tribes and the nomadic tribes mainly due to the lack of resources such as land, livestock, water and other ecological resources. Environmental degradation and competition over resources are undoubtedly some of the principal causes of the conflict in Darfur.’⁴ Ms Massidda was not the first to raise the issue. Far from it; the historical record is well-known.
3. Between 1967 and 2007, the total rainfall in the south and west of Sudan had reduced by 30 percent and as a consequence the Sahara expanded beyond a mile every year. The ensuing friction between farmers and pastoralists over the reducing grazing land and the few water sources available was at the heart of the civil war.⁵

¹ UN News, ‘Concrete action essential to fulfill Darfur promise: ICC Prosecutor’, Press Release on Peace and Security, 17 January 2022.

² UN Security Council, Resolution 1593, 31 March 2005, Document No S/RES/1593 (2005), p 1 (The Council, ‘[d]etermining that the situation in Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security, [a]cting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, [...] [d]ecides to refer the situation in Darfur since 1 July 2002 to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court; [...]’)

³ ICC Website (‘The ICC investigation, which opened in June 2005, has produced several cases with suspects ranging from Sudanese Government officials, Militia/Janjaweed leaders, and leaders of the Resistance Front, and has involved charges that include the following crimes: genocide: genocide by killing; genocide by causing serious bodily or mental harm; and genocide by deliberately inflicting on each target group conditions of life calculated to bring about the group’s physical destruction; war crimes: murder; attacks against the civilian population; destruction of property; rape; pillaging; and outrage upon personal dignity; violence to life and person; intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a peacekeeping mission; and crimes against humanity: murder; persecution; forcible transfer of population; rape; inhumane acts; imprisonment or severe deprivation of liberty; torture; extermination; and torture.’)

⁴ ICC, ‘The Prosecutor vs Ali Muhammad Al Abd-Al-Rahman (ICC-02/05-01/20) Transcript of confirmation of charges hearing’, 25 May 2020, p.33.

⁵ Oli Brown, Anne Hammill, and Robert McLeman, ‘Climate Change as the “New” Security Threat: Implications for Africa’, *International Affairs*, 83 (6): 1141–1154 (2007); CIA, *The World Factbook*, Sudan, 19 April 2022 (It is undisputed that significant environmental issues facing Sudan (then and now) include: water pollution; inadequate supplies of potable water; water scarcity and periodic drought; wildlife populations threatened by excessive hunting; soil erosion; desertification; deforestation; and loss of biodiversity.) See also, *Climate Diplomacy, Conflict between Masalit and Reizegat Abbala in Sudan*, available at <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/conflict-between-masalit-and-reizegat-abbala-sudan>.

4. A report by then-UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, issued in 2007 suggested that climate change and environmental degradation were partly responsible for the conflict.⁶ In the same year, other conflict analysts concluded that competition for resources between Darfur's Arab nomads and black African farmers was the cause of conflict claiming that '[m]uch of the unrest in Darfur and the misery [was] due to water shortages'.⁷ By that time, more than 200,000 Darfuris had died and millions had fled their homes. In 2008, there was growing concern about the environmental impact of Darfur's conflict, then in its fifth consecutive year, in particular the impact on Darfur's forest resources.⁸
5. As of late-2020, the situation was dire.⁹ According to the ICRC:

Communities are caught between extremes as clashes, droughts, and floods rob people of their homes and livelihoods again and again. [...] The result is that millions of people in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur do not have enough food, water, medical care or other necessities to survive [...].¹⁰

The UNSC's assessment in 2021 was no better, noting 'the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Sudan, particularly Darfur'.¹¹

⁶ 'A Climate Culprit In Darfur', United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, 16 June 2007. ('Almost invariably, we discuss Darfur in a convenient military and political shorthand—an ethnic conflict pitting militias against black rebels and farmers. Look to its roots, though, and you discover a more complex dynamic. Amid the diverse social and political causes, the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change. Two decades ago, the rains in southern Sudan began to fail. According to UN statistics, [...] the drying of sub-Saharan Africa derives, to some degree, from man-made global warming. It is no accident that the violence in Darfur erupted during the drought. Until then, Arab nomadic herders had lived amicably with settled farmers. [...] But once the rains stopped, farmers fenced their land for fear it would be ruined by the passing herds. For the first time in memory, there was no longer enough food and water for all. Fighting broke out. By 2003, it evolved into the full-fledged tragedy we witness today.')

⁷ 'Water find "may end Darfur war"', BBC, 18 July 2007 ('"Access to fresh water is essential for refugee survival, will help the peace process, and provides the necessary resources for the much needed economic development in Darfur", [geologist Farouk El-Baz, director of the Boston University Center for Remote Sensing] said.')

Over the years, experts have suggested links to climate change in several major conflicts including the war in Darfur, where sustained drought encouraged conflict between herders and farmers. See, e.g., Julian Borger, "Darfur conflict heralds era of wars triggered by climate change", UN report warns', *The Guardian*, 22 June 2007; David Biello, 'Can Climate Change Cause Conflict? Recent History Suggests So', *Scientific American*, 23 November 2009; 'Sudan Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment', UNEP, June 2007.

⁸ 'Destitution, distortion and deforestation: The impact of conflict on the timber and wood fuel trade in Darfur', UNEP, November 2008 (This study begins to investigate these impacts by exploring how the trade in timber and wood-fuel has changed since the conflict began, exploring the impact of the massive displacement of Darfur's population to the main urban centers, of the unprecedented international presence in Darfur, and of humanitarian programming.)

⁹ ICRC, 'Sudan: Food shortages widespread as communities face triple threat of clashes, climate shocks and COVID-19', Press Release, 30 October 2020 ('Clashes, climate shocks and COVID-19 are driving more Sudanese into poverty and threatening the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of people who were already reeling from decades of conflict and violence. One in four Sudanese are estimated to face food shortages today as prices climb and clashes, droughts and floods destroy people's ability to farm.')

¹⁰ ICRC, 'Sudan: Food shortages widespread as communities face triple threat of clashes, climate shocks and COVID-19', Press Release, 30 October 2020 (Gilles Carbonnier, ICRC vice-president, said at the end of a visit to the country)

¹¹ UN Security Council, Resolution 2579, 3 June 2021, Document No S/RES/2579 (2021), p 2 (with specific reference to the stabilization of Sudan). Unrelated to Darfur, but nevertheless instructive, the UNSC even more

6. In 2023, climate change continues to play a destabilizing role in Sudan. Global temperature rises continue to disrupt weather patterns that agricultural communities depend upon. An increase in droughts over the recent period and poor land management have combined to reduce the availability of viable agricultural land.¹² By some estimates, if rainfall patterns do not improve, the Sahara is likely to expand southwards at a rate of 1.5km per year, an unaffordable rate for a country already dealing with acute shortages of fertile land.¹³ The El Niño event currently underway is likely to make these pressures more acute.¹⁴ In other regions of the country, irregular weather patterns have resulted in increased rainfall during the current rainy season, resulting in more severe flooding and devastation for existing IDP communities.¹⁵

7. These pressures are coinciding with the latest civil war in Sudan, fought since April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Personal ambition and inter-service rivalries have played a key role in the emergence of this conflict.¹⁶ Fundamentally however, the key actors such as the SAF and RSF, which evolved from the Janjaweed militias legitimized under former President Bashir, owe their positions and rivalry to decisions taken in the context of the original Darfur conflict.¹⁷ Without the original competition over resources between herders and farmers, and the subsequent elevation of the Janjaweed militias to a position of state power, the current fracturing of the Sudanese state and descent to civil war would not exist in the form that it has taken. Without the resource conflict of Darfur, the RSF would not exist, nor be in a position to fight a civil war today.

8. One particularly worrying scenario in the latest context is that of farmers being forced from their land by the encroaching desert, only to be drawn into the artisanal gold mining industry. As more established gold mining operations have left the country in the face of the civil war, artisanal gold

recently recognized 'the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, on the humanitarian situation and stability in South Sudan' and emphasized 'the need for comprehensive risk assessments and risk management strategies [...] relating to these factors'. UN Security Council, Resolution 2625, 15 March 2022, Document No S/RES/2625 (2022), p 5. For further information on the ongoing situation in Darfur, see: OCHA, Sudan Situation Report, 24 May 2022, available at <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/sudan/>; DTM, Sudan — Emergency Event Tracking Report - Jebel Moon, West Darfur (Update 006), 16 March 2022, available at <https://displacement.iom.int/reports/sudan-emergency-event-tracking-report-jebel-moon-west-darfur-update-006?close=true>; Norwegian Refugee Council, Sudan: Outcry over increasing violence in Darfur as villages are burnt to the ground, 18 March 2022, available at <https://www.nrc.no/news/2022/march/sudan-increasing-violence-in-darfur/>.

¹² UNEP, 'Sudan - First State of Environment and Outlook Report 2020', 7 October 2020, p.205.

¹³ ACAPS, 'Sudan - Anticipated impacts of the 2023 rainy season', 21 June 2023, p.2.

¹⁴ WHO, 'Public Health Situation Analysis – El Niño Global Climate Event Covering July – September 2023', May 2023, p.9.

¹⁵ IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre, 'Seasonal Forecast June – September 2023'; Al Jazeera, 'War-torn Sudan battered by torrential rains', 8 August 2023; UNOCHA, 'Sudan Situation Report', 27 August 2023.

¹⁶ Reuters, 'Factbox: Sudan's RSF: from Arab militia to force battling the army for power', 13 July 2023.

¹⁷ Reuters, 'Factbox: Sudan's RSF: from Arab militia to force battling the army for power', 13 July 2023.

mining has increased.¹⁸ Evidence suggests that RSF forces have moved to capture and exploit these sites to fuel their war machine, while SAF forces have been known to provide 'protection areas' to carry out mining operations since before the current conflict.¹⁹

9. The Russian-backed Wagner group has also been involved, engaging in artisanal gold mining within Sudan and reportedly supplying the RSF with weapons, with Wagner leader Prigozhin meeting RSF representatives in the CAR days before his death earlier this year.²⁰ As these militarized groups seek to take advantage of the increase in artisanal mining operations, a devastating cost is imposed on the environment. The severe damage that artisanal mining is doing to Sudan's soil and water, with its reliance on toxic chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, is well documented.²¹ This is likely to further undermine the health and security of Sudan's population for years to come.
10. The current conflict must be understood within this cycle of climate insecurity and environmental degradation. Climate change reduces the available fertile land, driving tensions and conflict over resources. As farmers lose access to their livelihoods, and armed groups seek to profit from natural resources, a further toll is imposed on the environment, diminishing the remaining soil and sowing the seeds of future conflicts. In 2023, climate change and its after-effects remain a very real threat to Sudan's future.
11. That previous and ongoing violence in Darfur likely amounts to Rome Statute crimes is well known and well documented. After 17 years of ICC investigation, no one doubts the widespread commission of atrocity crimes of the continuing conflict. However, it is unclear to what extent (if any) the impact of climate security or serious environmental harm on the forced displacement of thousands of individuals and the destruction of their property and livelihoods has been sufficiently considered by the OTP. As already indicated, the OTP is uniquely placed to ensure that atrocity crimes are prosecuted within their context and that understanding of the causes of conflict and their impacts is maximized. Through so doing, the OTP's elucidation can pave the way for measures towards ensuring the non-repetition of such conflicts in the future.

¹⁸ Mohamed Salah Abdelrahman, 'Sudan's Other War: The Place of Gold - The Economic Impact of the War in Sudan No. 2', *Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker*, July 2023, p.8.

¹⁹ Ayin, Human Rights Hub, Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker, 'The Sudan Conflict Monitor #4', 19 June 2023, p.3; Mohamed Salah Abdelrahman, 'Sudan's Other War: The Place of Gold - The Economic Impact of the War in Sudan No. 2', *Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker*, July 2023, p.8; Mohamed Salah Abdelrahman, 'Sudan's Gold Curse, Briefing Paper No. 2: A Toxic Time Bomb: The Messy Handling of Cyanide and Thiourea in Sudan', *Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker*, August 2023, p.16.

²⁰ Philip Obaji Jr., 'Sudan: Russia's Wagner Group and the grab for power and gold', *Deutsche Welle*, 26 April 2023; Jeremy Howell, Peter Mwai & Grigor Atanesian, 'Wagner in Sudan: What have Russian mercenaries been up to?', *BBC News*, 24 April 2023; Benoit Faucon, Drew Hinshaw, Joe Parkinson and Nicholas Bariyo, 'The Last Days of Wagner's Prigozhin', *Wall Street Journal*, 24 August 2023.

²¹ Mohamed Salah Abdelrahman, 'Sudan's Gold Curse Briefing Paper No.1: How Mercury is Poisoning a Nation', *Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker*, October 2022; Mohamed Salah Abdelrahman, 'Sudan's Gold Curse, Briefing Paper No. 2: A Toxic Time Bomb: The Messy Handling of Cyanide and Thiourea in Sudan', *Sudan Transparency and Policy Tracker*, August 2023.

ANNEX 2

PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE SECURITY

'It is time to understand The Environment for what it is: the national-security issue of the early twenty-first century.' – Robert Kaplan (1994)²²

'Climate change is a risk multiplier. It aggravates already fragile situations, including in humanitarian contexts where communities have limited capacity to cope with additional shocks. Climate change also feeds other drivers of insecurity and conflict.' –Achim Steiner (2019)²³

I. Introduction

1. As a concept, climate security refers to the various global security risks induced, directly or indirectly, by changes in climate patterns. It is well known that certain effects of climate change may exacerbate existing risks that already endanger human security and/or create new ones. More specifically—and most relevant here—climate change can act as a catalyst for violent conflict and, as such, present a threat to international peace and security and lead to mass crimes. The body of research analyzing international conflicts from a climate-security perspective has identified pathways between climate stress and conflict through various factors including: food price shock, forced displacement, flooding, collapse of pastoral societies, terrorist groups seeking recruits in dehydrated lands, poverty, and violent conflict. Many of these factors operate in conjunction, demonstrating a complex interplay of political and socio-economic factors. The general consensus is that *in many situations around the world, the effects of climate change act not as simple and direct causes of conflict, but rather as complex and nuanced 'threat multipliers' in already precarious situations.*
2. The United Nations Security Council ('UNSC') has long emphasized the link between climate change and international peace and security. More than a decade ago, the UNSC recognized that 'the possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security', and called for a contextual approach to conflict analysis.²⁴ As a result, a number of UN agencies have prioritized the issue. As discussed below, NATO, the European Union, and many other regional bodies and organizations—as well

²² Robert Kaplan is a well-known US public intellectual and author of numerous books on world affairs.

²³ Achim Steiner is the Administrator of the United Nations Development Program (and formerly the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program).

²⁴ UN Security Council, 'Statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2011/15)', 20 July 2011, p.1.

as a great number of individual states party to the Rome Statute—have incorporated the Council’s conception of climate security into their global threat assessments and risk mitigation policies.²⁵ In parallel, non-governmental organizations have emphasized the connection between climate change and conflict.

II. International Framework

United Nations Agencies and Bodies

3. Both the UN Environmental Program (‘UNEP’)²⁶ and the UN Development Program (‘UNDP’)²⁷ recognize climate change as a conflict ‘threat multiplier’ with significant implications for global peace and security. As described by the latter, climate security occupies ‘the nexus of climate change, conflict prevention, and sustaining peace’.²⁸ And, more recently, according to the former:

Seventy per cent of the most climate-change-vulnerable countries are also among the most politically and economically fragile. And almost half of the 15 countries most susceptible to climate-related risks host a UN peacekeeping or special political mission. Although climate change may not always be a direct cause of conflict, it can multiply and amplify existing risks to peace and development. It can obstruct access to water, food, health, and housing. People who are already in vulnerable situations—including those living [...] in situations of conflict—may experience impacts more acutely because they have less capacity for coping and fewer resources with which to build resilience.²⁹

²⁵ *Nb.* In June 2020, a proposal for an independent ‘UN Climate Security Council’ was mooted at a conference marking the UN’s 75th birthday. Vesselin Popovski, ‘Towards Multiple Security Councils’, UN75 Global Governance Innovation Perspectives, *Stimson Center*, June 2020 (‘This paper argues that the UN Security Council’s ineffectiveness in addressing arising complex security challenges, such as conflict re-escalation, climate change, and COVID-19, among others, can be solved by establishing three additional Councils: a Peacebuilding Council, a Climate Security Council, and a Health Security Council. Each would focus on a specific security-related agenda, operate openly, transparently, responsibly, and without veto. [...] Climate change is, and will be, the major threat to human survival for a long time to come. The Security Council had a thematic debate on climate change as early as 2007, but it could never produce an entirely comprehensive resolution since then. Despite a few country-specific resolutions recognizing climate-security links, more proactive involvement is needed to address the impact of climate-related disasters on international peace and security. Accordingly, a specific Climate Security Council can collectively tackle such disasters, as well as the security implications from other urgent environmental concerns such as loss of biodiversity, land degradation, deforestation, oceans level rise resulting in salinization of arable land, air pollution, etc.’)

²⁶ See UNEP website (‘Where institutions and governments are unable to manage the stress or absorb the shocks of a changing climate, the risks to the stability of states and societies will increase. Climate change is the ultimate “threat multiplier” aggravating already fragile situations and potentially contributing to further social tensions and upheaval.’) See also UNEP, ‘Climate Change and Security Risks’ (providing an overview of progress on the issue from 2008–2015).

²⁷ See UNDP website (‘Most academics and policy experts agree that while climate change does not cause violent conflict, in and of itself, it can through its interaction with other social, political and economic factors have negative impacts on international peace and security. 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. The risks are greatest where institutions and communities are unable to manage the stress or absorb the shock of multi-hazard events and stressors and can lead to downward spirals when critical thresholds are exceeded and adaptive capacity compromised.’) *Nb.* UNDP partners with DPPA and UNEP under the Climate Security Mechanism, which was established in October 2018 with the support of the Government of Sweden to strengthen the UN’s capacity to address the linkages between climate change, peace and security.

²⁸ UNDP website.

²⁹ UNEP, ‘Climate action holds key to tackling global conflict’, 3 November 2021 (emphasis added).

In this regard, both agencies—in conjunction with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)—issued a ‘Climate Security Mechanism’ in 2020.³⁰

4. UNEP has since highlighted the importance of considering the serious environmental consequences of conflict in response to and recovery efforts:

“Environmental damage that arises during conflict brings devastating consequences for natural resources, critical ecosystems and people’s health, livelihoods and security. The containment, mitigation and remediation of environmental impacts is, therefore, an essential part of response to and recovery from conflict.”³¹

5. The security consequences of climate change were noted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (‘IPCC’), in its Fifth Assessment Report: ‘Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks.’³²

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

6. In 2015, NATO acknowledged that climate change is a significant security threat whose ‘bite is already being felt’.³³ In March 2021, the alliance announced its Climate Change and Security Action Plan.³⁴ Notably:

Climate change is one of the defining challenges of our times. **It is a threat multiplier that impacts Allied security**, both in the Euro-Atlantic area and in the Alliance’s broader neighborhood. [...]

The effects of climate change shape our geopolitical environment and may influence state behavior. For example, [...] desertification [...] can **contribute to increased instability** and geostrategic competition.

The implications of climate change include drought, soil erosion and marine environmental degradation. These can lead to famine, floods, loss of land and livelihood, and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls as well as on poor, vulnerable or marginalized populations, as well as potentially **exacerbate state fragility, fuel conflicts**, and lead to displacement, migration, and human

³⁰ DPPA, UNDP, and UNEP, ‘UN Conceptual Approach to Integrated Climate-Related Security Risk Assessments’, 2020 (setting out: (1) ‘A broad approach to climate-related security risk assessments’; (2) ‘Security risks resulting from the direct and indirect effects of climate change’; (3) ‘Security risks resulting from the impact of climate change on complex systems’, and (4) ‘Good practices’).

³¹ UNEP, ‘The Environmental Impact of the Conflict in Ukraine: A Preliminary Review’, 14 October 2022.

³² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, ‘Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report’, 2015.

³³ Tierney Smith, ‘NATO: Climate Change Is Significant Security Threat and “Its Bite Is Already Being Felt”’, Ecowatch, 12 October 2015.

³⁴ NATO, ‘Climate Change and Security Action Plan’, 14 June 2021.

mobility, creating conditions that can be exploited by state and non-state actors that threaten or challenge the Alliance.³⁵ (Emphasis added)

The plan requires NATO to conduct an annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment, aid in adaptation efforts, contribute to mitigation of climate change, and enhance outreach programs.³⁶ Notably, 'NATO will strengthen exchanges with partner countries, as well as with international and regional organizations that are active on climate change and security issues, including the EU, the UN, and others, where appropriate'.³⁷

European Union

7. In 2015, the European Council noted that if climate change is 'not urgently managed, [it] will put at risk [...] peace, stability, and security'.³⁸ In 2018, the European External Action Service ('EEAS') hosted an event on 'Climate, Peace, and Security: The Time for Action'.³⁹ In 2021, the European Parliament published an 'in-depth analysis' on the anticipated climate impacts on the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy ('CSDP'), acknowledging the '[n]eed to adapt to an era in which climate change will compound many of the strains that underpin conflict, fragility, and instability'.⁴⁰ Among other things, the report outlines how climate impacts are exacerbating multiple tensions in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa (including Kenya): 'the most acute and immediate security concerns [in these regions] stem from the interaction between a degraded environment and climate change impacts, leading to diminished food security and competition for resources between farmers and pastoralists'.⁴¹

8. In 2023, the European Commission proposed a new strategy to address the joint threat of 'climate change and environmental degradation in the fields of peace, security, and defence'.⁴² The Commission recognized that:

Recurrent climate extremes, rising temperatures and sea levels, desertification, water scarcity, threats to biodiversity, environmental pollution and contamination are threatening the health and well-being of humanity, and can create greater displacement, migratory movements, pandemics, social unrest, instability and even conflicts. [...] **Climate change and environmental degradation are intrinsically interlinked and exacerbating each other.**⁴³

³⁵ NATO, 'Climate Change and Security Action Plan', 14 June 2021, paras 1–4.

³⁶ NATO, 'Climate Change and Security Action Plan', 14 June 2021, paras 9.1–9.4.

³⁷ NATO, 'Climate Change and Security Action Plan', 14 June 2021, para 9.4.

³⁸ Council of the European Union, 'Council Conclusions on Climate Diplomacy', 20 July 2015.

³⁹ EEAS, 'Climate, Peace, and Security: The Time for Action', 22 June 2018.

⁴⁰ European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, 'Preparing the CSDP for the New Security Environment Created by Climate Change', June 2021, p 3.

⁴¹ European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, Policy Department, 'Preparing the CSDP for the New Security Environment Created by Climate Change', June 2021, p 3; *ibid*, pp 13–19.

⁴² European Commission, 'A new outlook on the climate and security nexus: Addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence', 28 June 2023, p.1.

⁴³ European Commission, 'A new outlook on the climate and security nexus: Addressing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence', 28 June 2023, p.1.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

9. Between 2013 and 2017, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe ('OSCE') established a project to enhance understanding and awareness of climate change as a security challenge in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Southern Caucasus.⁴⁴

Once only considered as an 'environmental issue', climate change is increasingly being included as an inherent element of national and international security agendas. It is seen as a 'threat multiplier', **exacerbating existing threats to security** and increasing environmental stress, adding to pressures that can push the responsive capacities of governments to their limits.⁴⁵ (Emphasis added)

The project developed various reports on climate change and security covering multiple locations, including the Dniester River Basin in Ukraine.⁴⁶

10. More recently, the OSCE has stressed the importance of recognizing the serious environmental harm stemming from contemporary conflicts:

"The full-scale war launched against Ukraine in February 2022 is causing serious threats to the environment, human health and well-being. Regular attacks on hazardous industrial facilities and critical infrastructure, the destruction of built-up areas resulting in large volumes of building debris, as well as military waste with toxic components seriously affect the environment and environmental security across the country and beyond.⁴⁷

International Committee of the Red Cross

11. The International Committee of the Red Cross ('ICRC')—an institution with an undeniable affinity to the ICC—has considered the issue for some time. A 2010 ICRC review⁴⁸ addressed key concerns, notably the impact of resource scarcity on international peace and security:

Dwindling resources in an uncertain political, economic, and social context are capable of generating conflict and instability, but the causal mechanisms are often indirect. [...] In extreme cases, these [scarcities] can contribute to local or regional

⁴⁴ OSCE Secretariat, 'Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Southern Caucasus'. *Nb.* The project was led by the OSCE and implemented jointly by the OSCE, UN Environment, UNECE, UNDP, and REC within the framework of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative.

⁴⁵ OSCE Secretariat, 'Climate Change and Security in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Southern Caucasus'.

⁴⁶ The following countries were targeted: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. And a number of reports were produced. See, www.osce.org/projects/climate-change-and-security.

⁴⁷ OSCE, 'Environmental Monitoring of the War Against Ukraine and Recovery Strategy', 1 November 2022.

⁴⁸ 'Humanitarian Debate: Law, Policy, Action [on the] Environment', *International Review of the Red Cross*, Volume 92, Number 879, September 2010 (the 'ICRC Review').

conflicts, which may increase over time as environmental scarcities worsen. While such internal, resource-based conflicts may not be as conspicuous as wars at an international level, there is nevertheless a potential for **significant repercussions upon the security interests of both the developing and the industrialized countries**, for they can affect international trade relations, produce humanitarian disasters, and lead to growing numbers of refugee flows.⁴⁹

12. A detailed ICRC report from 2020 ‘explores how people deal with the combination of conflict and climate risks’ and ‘discusses how the ICRC, and the humanitarian sector in general, will have to adjust and adapt to address these risks’.⁵⁰

13. With respect to water in particular, the ICRC has observed:

Water scarcity, accelerated by climate change, affects water availability and may threaten peace and security. This role of water, as a contributing factor for triggering wars, sheds light on the significance of the protection of water during armed conflict. [...] The analysis on the linkage between water and armed conflict finds its origin in the studies on the role of environmental factors as drivers of conflict between states. Environmental security studies have underlined the role of water as the potential trigger for armed struggles [...]. Water was considered as the main issue of several wars in the past and it is assumed likely to trigger new wars in the future. [...] [Such resources] can be read **both as a factor triggering armed conflicts and also as a weapon and an objective of armed conflict**.⁵¹ (Emphasis added)

14. The ICRC actively participated in the most recent UNSC debate,⁵² highlighting the UNSC’s role ‘within its traditional functions of peacekeeping, conflict mediation and conflict prevention’.⁵³ The

⁴⁹ Martin Beniston, ‘Climate change and its impacts: growing stress factors for human societies’, in ICRC review, *op cit*.

⁵⁰ ICRC, ‘When Rain Turns to Dust: Understanding and Responding to the Combined Impact of Armed Conflicts and the Climate and Environment Crisis on People’s Lives’, July 2020.

⁵¹ Mara Tignino, ‘Water, International Peace, and Security’, in ICRC review, *op cit*.

⁵² ICRC, ‘Statement for the 2021 Security Council Open Debate: Climate and Security’, 22 September 2021 (‘Today, what we see is clear: many people affected by armed conflict and violence are also disproportionately impacted by climate risks. [...] [G]reater climate variability increases societal strains particularly in fragile settings with overlapping crises and limited resources. The opposite is also true: armed conflict sharply increases the fragility of national and local institutions, essential services, infrastructure, and governance which are necessary to strengthen people’s resilience to a changing climate. The convergence of climate risk, environmental degradation and conflict also has grave humanitarian consequences. It threatens people’s lives and health, and worsens food, economic, and water insecurity. It also exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. [...] Shifts in pastoral routes and agricultural practices in response to a changing climate may stir tensions when communities that lack common established relationships and conflict-resolution mechanisms must share land and other resources.’)

⁵³ ICRC, ‘Statement for the 2021 Security Council Open Debate: Climate and Security’, 22 September 2021 (‘First, countries affected by conflict, other violence or fragility tend to suffer from the absence of strong governance and inclusive institutions. In such places, while climate change may not cause conflict, it may contribute to exacerbating and prolonging conflict and instability by further weakening institutions, systems, and people’s coping mechanisms. It may also aggravate communal violence. These combined issues can constitute threats to international peace and security. At the same time, hard security responses alone will not tackle these risks. Rather, conflict-sensitive and preventive responses must strengthen people’s resilience and adaptive capacities to short-and longer-term changes and avoid short term fixes which fail to both predict and address changing patterns of needs. Second, damage and destruction of the natural environment in armed conflict, which further reduces people’s resilience and adaptation to climate change, can be a catalyst for displacement, and can contribute to inter communal conflict as a result of loss of livelihoods and increased competition for resources. Greater respect for international humanitarian law rules that protect the natural environment can limit its degradation, and thus reduce the harm and the risks that conflict-affected communities endure, including as a result of climate change. It can also contribute to making them more

ICRC's perspective on climate security is, of course, complementary to the various prohibitions recognized by international humanitarian law concerning environmental destruction.⁵⁴

International Think Tanks

15. Reiterating much of the organizational discourse set out above, several noted international think tanks have taken on a leading advocacy role. The complex nature of the issue has been addressed by Robert Malley, the former president and CEO of the International Crisis Group (ICG):

First, we should be careful to neither understate nor overstate the nature of the relationship between climate and deadly conflict. [...] By not understating the causal link, I mean acknowledging that *climate change is undeniably a conflict threat multiplier*. We are by now all familiar with the data suggesting a **ten to twenty per cent increase in the risk of armed conflict associated with every half-degree increase in local temperatures**, and that could be a conservative estimate. Researchers will of course debate the precise role of climate-related risks in any crisis, but there's wide consensus that climate change can, for example, increase food insecurity, water scarcity and resource competition, disrupt livelihoods, and spur migration or what have been called environmental refugees. And these are all key factors that, as Crisis Group has documented for over two decades, can in turn play a key role in shaping deadly conflicts—for example, by prompting inter- or intra-state clashes over resources, discrediting central states, or bolstering the appeal of non-state armed groups and facilitating their recruitment drives.⁵⁵ (Emphasis added)

resilient to further shocks. This is why the ICRC is accelerating its outreach to States with its updated Guidelines on the Protection of the Natural Environment in Armed Conflict, setting out 32 rules and recommendations relating to the protection of the natural environment under IHL, and calling on states to promote respect for and comply with these rules. Finally, sustainable peace and security will not be established by focusing only on military and security measures to prevent and address conflict and violence. The Council could consider strengthening its analysis of how combined climate and security risks intersect and exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, taking into account people's individual characteristics, such as their age, gender or livelihoods, and situation. We must ensure those most at risk are urgent priorities.')

⁵⁴ 'Environment and International Humanitarian Law', ICRC, 29 October 2010 ('International humanitarian law aims to protect the civilian population during armed conflict and to ensure its survival. As a result, it also seeks to protect the natural environment without which human life is impossible. IHL protects the environment in two ways: through its general provisions and through some additional, specific provisions.');" 'Natural Environment: Neglected Victim of Armed Conflict', ICRC, 5 June 2019 ('International humanitarian law prohibits using the natural environment as a weapon. This means that it forbids deliberate attacks against the natural environment—including the destruction of natural resources and the use of environmental modification techniques [agent orange, burning oil fields]. [...] Using the natural environment as a weapon, or directing attacks against it, can cause immense harm. [...] [W]hen a society shifts from war to peace, it is vitally important to take measures to check deforestation and excessive use of natural resources. [...] [I]nternational humanitarian law forbids attacks against the natural environment except in those rare cases when it has become a military objective. International humanitarian law also requires warring parties to take the possibility of environmental damage into account while deciding whether to carry out an attack.')

⁵⁵ Robert Malley, 'Climate Change Is Shaping the Future of Conflict', *International Crisis Group*, 5 May 2020.

Mr Malley's conclusion is fundamental: 'In other words, the impact of climate change on conflict is context-specific.'⁵⁶ (Like the ICRC, the ICG campaigned robustly in support of the recently vetoed UNSC resolution.⁵⁷)

16. According to the Climate Security Expert Network ('CSEN'), while 'the impacts of climate-related events on security are widely known', concrete action is needed 'in tackling climate-related security risks'.⁵⁸ Participants of the CSEN Roundtable in January 2021 were clear about the UNSC's role in analyzing climate change impacts across different work areas and cooperating with other UN organs to address them.⁵⁹
17. The Geneva Environment Network has highlighted the role that the environmental consequences of armed conflict play in undermining peace and security. As they have stated, 'Environmental degradation and destruction from conflicts not only takes a toll on nature itself, but also exacerbates food and water insecurity and destroys livelihoods. Environmental damage thus

⁵⁶ Robert Malley, 'Climate Change Is Shaping the Future of Conflict', *International Crisis Group*, 5 May 2020.

⁵⁷ See International Crisis Group, Q&A, 'Can the UN Security Council Agree on a Climate Security Resolution?', 20 October 2021 (regarding UN Security Council, Draft Resolution, 13 December 2021, Document No S/2021/990); International Crisis Group, 'Climate Security: A Special Series', 29 October 2021 ('The relationship between climate change and deadly conflict is complex and context-specific. Climate change affects every aspect of life, damaging food systems, displacing millions, and shaping the future of conflict. It is undeniable that climate change is a threat multiplier that is already increasing food insecurity, water scarcity and resource competition, while disrupting livelihoods and spurring migration. In turn, deadly conflict and political instability are contributing to climate change.');

⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, Q&A, 'Getting Conflict into the Global Climate Conversation', 5 November 2021 ('Climate change today is also fueling violence and instability in some parts of the world, and we can expect to see that trend worsen. [...] Climate-induced violence—often put in the catch-all category of "climate security", referring to how climate change affects matters of peace and security [...] Most people concerned with climate security speak about climatic distress as a "threat multiplier" or "risk multiplier"—meaning that climate change exacerbates political, social and economic tensions, thereby raising conflict risk. [...] The evidence tying climate change to conflict is growing quickly, even if the link is not yet as widely understood as the connection between human activity and climate change. It took the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change nearly 30 years to reach the degree of certainty it expressed in its August report that human activity causes climate change. Many people could die needlessly if major powers wait to accept that climate change increases risks of conflict—and to act accordingly. [...] Climate change and conflict do not exist in isolation from each other. The countries most exposed to climate change are disproportionately affected by conflict [...].')

⁵⁸ CSEN website; see also Daria Ivleva, Stella Schaller, Benjamin Pohl, Janani Vivekananda, 'Climate Change and Security: A Short Q&A', *Climate Security Expert Network*, 30 October 2019 ('The climate crisis is a key risk to global peace and stability. It can act as a risk multiplier and intensify conflict drivers such as livelihood insecurity and socio-political grievances. The effects of climate change can aggravate and prolong conflicts and make it harder to reach and sustain peace. Since the UN Security Council (UNSC) has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, addressing climate change—one of the biggest security threats of the 21st century—is at the core of its mandate. [...] Because climate change impacts can create situations that disturb peace and stability such as volatile food prices and access to water, addressing climate change-related security risks is an important dimension of agendas to sustain the peace, stabilize communities, and prevent conflict. [...] The question is not whether climate change causes conflict but how climate change affects all stages of the conflict cycle. Many studies show that climate change can be a risk multiplier—that it can aggravate existing tensions and compound the effect of more immediate drivers of instability such as inequality, lack of freedom, and weak institutions. [...] There is broad consensus in climate-conflict research that the effect of climate change on conflict is neither linear nor direct. Rather, it is mediated by social, economic and institutional factors and often characterized by 'tipping points'. There is also broad consensus that climate-related security risks depend on the specific context.')

⁵⁹ CSEN, 'Summary: CSEN Roundtable January 2021', January 2021; see also Weathering Risk, 'Analysis & Foresight' (introduced at the CSEN roundtable).

threatens the well-being, health and survival of local populations, and this increases their vulnerability for years and even decades.’⁶⁰

18. The International Military Council on Climate and Security produced the 2021 World Climate and Security Report, which provides an in-depth analysis of multiple climate security risks in a range of areas, from Sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union: ‘[N]ow more than ever, climate change is a critical aspect of national and global security, requiring *collective global action* to meet this unprecedented threat.’⁶¹

III. Domestic Perspectives

19. Much of the climate-security debate has emerged from domestic military, intelligence, and national-security sectors and their assessment of climate change, ‘in both scale and potential impact, [as] a strategically-significant security risk that will affect [states’] most basic resources, from food to water to energy’.⁶²
20. According to the US-based Center for Climate and Security (‘CCS’):

The climate century is upon us [...]. No longer can climate change be categorized solely as an environmental issue—it is a **grave threat to national security. Indeed, it may be *the* threat.** While there are many national security challenges facing [states] and the world, climate change [...] exacerbates and accelerates already existing threats. It is also manifestly unjust. In a cruel irony, the poorest nations of the world that contributed the least to global warming will bear the brunt of climate change’s impacts. What we, as a society, choose to do (or not do) now will define the health and welfare of future generations. Their fate is increasingly shaped by climate change’s dramatic, erratic, and catastrophic national security effects. [...] The intelligence and national security communities have begun to speak up louder and actively engage with the world’s most authoritative climate science reports in their own threat assessments.⁶³ (Emphasis added)

⁶⁰ Geneva Environment Network, ‘Protecting the Environment in Armed Conflict’, 15 March 2023.

⁶¹ International Military Council on Climate and Security, ‘The World Climate and Security Report 2021’, June 2021 (a product of the IMCCS Expert Group).

⁶² CCS website (In the United States, analysis of climate security and the development of policy ideas for addressing it has been led by the Center for Climate and Security, founded in 2011 and now an institute of the Council on Strategic Risks.); see also Joshua Busby, ‘Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action’, *Council on Foreign Relations*, CSR No 32, November 2007 (‘Internationally, climate change may cause humanitarian disasters, contribute to political violence, and undermine weak governments. [...] The [long-term] strategic dimensions of reducing greenhouse gas emissions [...] are essential to avoid unmanageable security problems. Participation in reducing emissions can help integrate all nations into the global rules-based order, as well as help stabilize certain countries.’)

⁶³ Mark Nevitt, ‘Our Greatest National Security Threat?’, *Just Security*, 17 April 2019 (‘Earlier this year, the [US] Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) issued a new, clear-eyed threat assessment report that highlighted climate change’s destabilizing effects. It stated that the ‘negative effects of environmental degradation and climate change will impact human security challenges, threaten public health, and lead to historic levels of human displacement’. Specifically, the ODNI report noted: ‘global environmental and ecological degradation, as well as climate change, are likely to fuel competition for resources, economic distress, and social discontent through 2019 and beyond. Climate hazards such as extreme weather, higher temperatures, droughts, floods, wildfires, storms, sea level rise, soil degradation, and acidifying oceans are intensifying, threatening infrastructure, health, and water and food security.’ The intelligence community—

A forthcoming report ('Challenge Accepted: A Progress Report on the Climate Security Plan for America and Recommendations for the Way Ahead') demonstrates the understanding and support for action from the US.

21. US intelligence analysts have expressed concern about the 'serious security risks' of climate change since the 1980s.⁶⁴ According to a 2021 report from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, intensifying physical effects of climate change 'will exacerbate geopolitical flashpoints, particularly after 2030, and key countries and regions will face increasing risks of instability and need for humanitarian assistance'. It names a number of countries (including Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Colombia) as likely to face extreme weather episodes that will pose threats to energy, food, water, and health security: 'Diminished energy, food, and water security in the 11 countries probably will exacerbate poverty, tribal or ethnic intercommunal tensions, and dissatisfaction with governments, increasing the risk of social, economic, and political instability.'⁶⁵
22. A community of practice has emerged among domestic think tanks, led by organizations such as the US-based Center for Climate and Security and CNA's Military Advisory Board,⁶⁶ the German-

composed of sober-minded, non-partisan professionals—brings enormous credibility and perspective when weighing [...] complex security threats [...].')

⁶⁴ Dana Nuccitelli, 'The Long History of Climate Change Security Risks', Yale Climate Connections, 8 April 2019; Joshua Busby, 'Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action', Council on Foreign Relations, CSR No 32, November 2007 ('Climate change presents a serious threat to the security and prosperity of the United States and other countries.');

Elizabeth Malone, 'Climate Change and National Security', 17 October 2012, in *Weather, Climate, and Society*, 5 (1): 93–95 (indicating that second and third order impacts of climate change, such as migration and state stability, are of concern for the US defense and intelligence communities); Reynard Loki, 'Four Reasons Climate Change Affects National Security', AlterNet, 20 May 2015 (noting a 2015 report published by the White House that found that climate change puts coastal areas at risk, that a changing Arctic poses risks to other parts of the country, risk for infrastructure, and increases demands on military resources); 'Worldwide Threat Assessment: Climate Magnifying Instability', Center for Climate and Security, 2016 (quoting then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper: 'Unpredictable instability has become the "new normal", and this trend will continue for the foreseeable future. Extreme weather, climate change, environmental degradation, rising demand for food and water, poor policy decisions, and inadequate infrastructure will magnify this instability.')

⁶⁵ Amanda Macias, 'These 11 countries could face extreme instability from climate change, says US intelligence', CNBC, 30 November 2021; see also Busby, Joshua (2021) 'Beyond internal conflict: The emergent practice of climate security' *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 58(1) 186-194. *Nb.* During the Obama administration, several reports were issued which highlighted the risks for bases, missions, and training, with thematic reports on the Arctic, food security and water security, as well as branch-specific risks for the Navy and the Combatant Commands. Busby, Joshua (2016) *Climate change and US national security: Sustaining security amidst unsustainability*. In: Jeremi Suri & Benjamin Valentino (eds) *Sustainable Security: Rethinking American National Security Strategy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁶ Most recent report 'National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change' published in 2014. This was an update on a report published in 2007, recognizing climate change as a 'threat multiplier'. It identifies climate change as a "catalyst for instability and conflict". It is stated "only improvements in resilience coupled with actions on stabilizing climate change will reduce long-term risk; potential security consequences of climate change should serve as catalysts for cooperation and change, rather than as catalysts for instability and conflict; rapid population growth, especially in coastal and urban areas, have increased the challenge of understanding the strategic security risks of projected climate change; accelerated melting of "old ice" in the Arctic is making the region more accessible to human activities, including shipping, resource extraction, fisheries and tourism; projected climate change impacts in the US, particularly to military, infrastructure, economic and social support systems, will encumber homeland security; and choices regarding how the finite

based Adelphi, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).⁶⁷ In 2019, a Dutch think tank highlighted that '[d]evelopments among regional organizations illustrate a growing awareness and action on climate security'.⁶⁸ German leadership on the issue has been recently influential at the UN.⁶⁹

END

resources of water, food and energy will be produced, distributed and used will have increasing security implications, given their inextricable links".

⁶⁷ 'Climate Change and Security', Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (The development of a Climate Change and Security project which aims to 'deepen knowledge on how, when and why climate-related security risks arise, and how these risks can be mitigated, strengthening human security and long-term sustainable peace'.)

⁶⁸ Dan Smith, Malin Mobjörk, Florian Krampe, Karolina Eklöv, 'Climate Security: Making it Doable', *Clingendael Institute* (Netherlands Institute of International Relations), February 2019 ('A number of thematic debates in the European Union system, the African Union Peace and Security Council, and the Arab League have been held, interrogating the links between, for instance, peace and climate, and water and security.')

⁶⁹ According to Germany's former Foreign Minister Heiko Maas: 'Germany has made climate change diplomacy one of the priorities of its foreign policy. We are providing humanitarian assistance for countries suffering from the consequences of extreme weather events. And we are tackling the risks that climate change poses to peace and security.' GDR Federal Foreign Office, 'Climate Change Conference: Focusing on the impact of climate change on security', 31 October 2021. On this, Germany, Nauru, and others (58 Member states, not including China, Russia, and India) established a Group of Friends on Climate Security at the United Nations in New York, making climate and security one of the focal issues of Germany's membership of the Security Council. Their joint position outlined the countries collective concerns about climate change and its threat to security, recognizing '[t]hat adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security, destabilize conflict regions further or create new conflicts within and between countries'. Group of Friends on Climate and Security, Joint Position.

[Climate Counsel](#) is a non-profit foundation (*stichting*) based in the Hague, Netherlands. We are a team of former United Nations lawyers dedicated to environmental and climate justice. With decades of experience at the UN international criminal tribunals, we use our expertise in war crimes and crimes against humanity to tackle the environmental crisis. We investigate situations involving destruction of the natural environment and harm to dependent communities. We litigate on behalf of affected communities to bring perpetrators to justice. We advocate for a new 'ecocide' law alongside global partners.

[Gisa Group](#) was founded on the premise that the Sudanese people have the power to free themselves from authoritarianism, end conflict, and transition into civilian governance. We support the growth of Sudan's new civil society by running transformative flagship projects that show what is possible and by building coordination and collaboration hubs and platforms for civil society that can scale. Gisa aims to continue engaging the Sudanese public with reliable journalism, human rights advocacy, and civic engagement tools and resources.

[The Sudan Human Rights Hub](#) (SHRH) supplies informal and formal organizations with the training they need to effectively gather evidence of human rights abuses. It also serves as a neutral space for cooperation and knowledge sharing with a focus on the effective use of data. The Hub currently works with nearly 40 organizations across the country. The SHRH network and academy are focused on capacity building, and connecting local and international organizations. The SHRH Archive Unit holds and maintains one of Sudan's largest human rights archives which includes several hundred thousand open source videos and photos from the revolutionary era and 60TB of human rights documentation.