

From a Climate-Security Nexus of Conflicts to a Nexus of Synergies

Climate change action for peacebuilding and human security

Call for Abstracts to a Workshop at University of Hamburg, CLICCS Cluster of Excellence

As the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) unveils, the planet is 1.2⁰C warmer than the preindustrial period, which is impacting the natural system immensely. In recent days, we are seeing the manifestations in the appearance of extreme heatwaves and wildfires in the Mediterranean region and across the west coast of North America, devastating floods in the southwestern border of Germany and Henan province in China, and other weather extremes around the world. These recent examples are likely related to climate change, posing a huge risk to human and livelihood securities. In worst scenarios, it could also contribute to human insecurity and violent conflict. Since the 4th IPCC Assessment Report, scholars have connected the dots between climate change and security. Despite substantial controversies, some consensus has evolved that climate risk could be a driver of conflict risk by interacting with and multiplying risk factors and stressors, e.g., food and water insecurity, disasters, human migration, lack of income opportunities and other material wellbeing. Climate change causes more harm to people in a fragile society where justice and equity in all forms (i.e., social, economic, environmental, political, etc.) are absent or inadequate. This situation is further deteriorating by the worldwide pandemic, Covid-19, that stalled human life and livelihoods to a greater extent.

The climate change and security nexus is a framework for complex cause-effect interactions of four elements, climate change, natural resources, human security and social stability, which can combine in compound events, tipping points and cascading risks. While climate change could exacerbate conditions for climate actions, each problem can be addressed by separate policies. The workshop analyses the evolving climate-security nexus, addresses the connections between conflict and cooperation, and considers transitions towards an integrated nexus of synergies and solutions, focusing on climate adaptation initiatives and their links to conflict. We break them down into five possible themes:

- a) Considered as a risk multiplier, climate change actions could aggravate conflict and violence. It disproportionately affects vulnerable states and peoples in regional hot spots, climate mitigation and adaptation aim to prevent vulnerabilities and avoid conflicts rather than aggravating them.
- b) Climate change actions could be a game-changer and multiplier of synergies and solution concepts (e.g. in energy, migration, disaster prevention, conflict resolution) in bringing social cohesion and peace. Communities could play a key role in designing adaptation policies and reducing the risk of causing unintended harm that inflicts tension, distrust, and conflict in regional contexts.
- c) There are many cases in the world where ethnic and political divides are very vivid and have been undergoing violent conflict for many decades. They are in double jeopardy in the face of climate change. Human lives and livelihoods are not only damaged by violent conflict, but

the onsets of climate change would fuel that risk of their sufferings. It is important to understand how climate change actions could seal the cracks among groups and craft a pathway of transition towards peace and prosperity against conflict risk and climate risk.

- d) From the beginning of 2020, the whole world is hugely shaken by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Scientists argue that the world could experience such pandemics more frequently in the era of climate change in the Anthropocene, leading to possible compound effects of both calamities. While restrictions on social behaviour have proven critical for slowing contamination down, most research focuses on environmental and biological factors of contagion, missing the social component that may not only hamper public containment policies but also lead to scepticism, denial and conflict.
- e) Considering plausible scenarios, climate change actions must move beyond a mere technical understanding of building resilience and need policymaking to carefully balance needs and capacities, at minimum, to avoid causing harm and, at maximum, contribute to peace. Implementation includes a wide range of strategies: human rights focus on ensuring equity, justice, inclusion and learning; strengthening capabilities at local and central government levels; risk management and mitigation; technologies, early warning and traditional knowledge, conflict resolution, peacebuilding and good governance.

To understand theoretical complexities and evidence on climate change action as a peacebuilding process, the climate-security nexus working group (known as the B3 project) of the Cluster of Excellence “Climate, Climatic Change, and Society” (CLICCS) at Hamburg University, invites original research in the relevant thematic area to be presented in a virtual workshop. We would like to invite reviews, case studies, theoretical, empirical and methodological papers from academics and practitioners to explore different aspects of climate change actions through the lenses of security and conflict trigger, peacebuilding, and future risks. We encourage the submission of abstracts on any relevant topic along with the above points. Please send your abstracts within 300 words with full name, affiliation, title to clisec-workshop.cliccs@uni-hamburg.de.

Below are major dates and timelines:

- Submission of abstracts: 30 September 2021
- Selection of abstracts: 15 October 2021
- Registration for the event: 10 November 2021
- Articles for planned special issue: TBC
- Circulation of the final programme: 17 November 2021
- Time of the event: December 2 to 3, 2021

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