



CAIRO INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONFLICT
RESOLUTION, PEACEKEEPING & PEACEBUILDING
مركز القاهرة الدولي لتسوية النزاعات وحفظ وبناء السلام



GUIDEBOOK

Addressing Climate, Peace and Security Programming in UN Peace Operations in Africa

Foreword

UN Peace Operations are deployed in regions marked by increasingly multilayered challenges and shifting conflict and security dynamics. Climate change is among these challenges, especially in fragile and conflict affected settings, where limited adaptive capacities and high exposure to climate change impacts can hinder peacebuilding efforts.

Cognizant of this, there have been multiple efforts and initiatives seeking to address climate, peace and security challenges. The COP27 Presidency launched the Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) initiative in Sharm El Sheikh, the first initiative of its kind to be launched by a COP presidency in this area. CRSP seeks to leverage climate action as an entry point for sustainable peace and development, in line with national ownership and context specificity.

As the CRSP Secretariat, CCCPA has sought to advance CRSP's implementation through addressing knowledge gaps, fostering dialogue and strengthening capacity building. In this context, CCCPA launched, in 2023, the flagship training program titled "Climate Responsive Programming for Sustaining Peace", which aims to enhance the capacities of African governments and regional organizations on the climate, peace and security nexus, as well as provide the needed tools to assess and respond to climate change in a holistic manner.

This guidebook on "Addressing Climate, Peace and Security Programming in UN Peace Operations in Africa" was developed as part of the training course "Climate, Peace and Security in the Context of Peace Operations" which was conducted in implementation of one of Egypt's pledges presented during the United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial in Accra in December 2023, with the generous support of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).

This guidebook aims to serve as a valuable companion for peace operations personnel. Through case studies, best practices, and lessons learned, it helps to provide a practical roadmap to address climate change considerations in UN Peace Operations programming, in a way that reinforces the contribution of these operations to peacebuilding. We hope that the guidance offered in this guidebook will assist peace operations personnel in navigating climate-related risks, thus supporting efforts to build a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Ahmed Abdel-Latif
Director-General, CCCPA

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ABOUT THE CAIRO INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION, PEACEKEEPING AND PEACEBUILDING (CCCPA)

Established in 1994, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) is an Egyptian public agency and an African Union (AU) Center of Excellence in training, capacity building, and research on peace and security.

CCCPA is the Secretariat of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development and the COP27 Presidency Initiative “Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP)”, and the Co-Chair of the African Union Network of Think Tanks for Peace (NeTT4PEACE), launched in February 2023.

The Center is a major voice from the region on a wide range of topics, including (a) conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding; (b) climate, peace, and development; (c) preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism; (d) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration; (e) combating transnational threats; and (f) the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF THE FRANCOPHONIE (OIF)

The International Organisation of the Francophonie (OIF) has been dedicated since 1970 to promoting the French language and political, educational, economic and cultural cooperation among the 88 member countries of the OIF.

The Charter of the Francophonie defines the institution; its highest authority, the Summit of the Francophonie; and its cornerstone, the Secretary General of the Francophonie, a position currently held by Louise Mushikiwabo.

The OIF implements multilateral francophone cooperation projects alongside the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie [Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie] and four operating agencies: Agence universitaire de la Francophonie [Association of Francophone Universities], TV5MONDE, Association internationale des maires francophones [International Association of Francophone Mayors], and Université Senghor [Senghor University] in Alexandria.

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Definitions



ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Environmental degradation refers to the deterioration of the natural environment, leading to a decline in biodiversity and the health of ecosystems. This process may have natural causes but is often accelerated by human actions such as industrial pollution, deforestation, unsustainable resource extraction, climate change impacts, and the aftermath of conflicts and natural disasters.¹

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change, as defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), refers to long-term changes in climate properties due to natural variability or human activities. It involves alterations in climate mean and/or variability over decades.²

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE SECURITY

Originally emerging as “environmental security” in the 1980s, it highlighted non-military threats to human lives from environmental degradation. In the 1990s, the focus shifted to the link between environmental degradation and armed conflict. The term “climate , peace and security” has gained prominence, addressing the impacts of climate change on political, human, and national security.³

PEACE OPERATIONS:

Peace Operations involve international efforts to manage, maintain, or establish peace, including preventing conflicts. These operations, often led by the UN or other regional and international entities, range from peacekeeping operations (PKOs), special political missions (SPMs), and peace enforcement operations (PEO) to peace making, peace building, and conflict prevention. They aim to stabilize conflict zones, support reconciliation, and facilitate the transition to stable governance through military and non-military means, either as part of international coalitions or independently.⁴

PEACEBUILDING (UNITED NATIONS DEFINITION)

'Peacebuilding aims to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. It is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace.'⁵



¹ Homer-Dixon, T.F., 1999. *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*. Princeton University Press.
Rosvold, E.L., 2021. Chapter 19 - Security implications of climate change: The climate-conflict nexus, in: Letcher, T.M. (Ed.), *The Impacts of Climate Change*. Elsevier, pp. 465–478.
McDonald, M., 2013. *Discourses of Climate Security*. *Political Geography* 33, 42–51.

² Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018. *Joint Publication 3-07.3 Peace Operations* | Public Intelligence.

³ United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d. *Terminology* [WWW Document]. United Nations Peacekeeping. URL <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology> (accessed 8.2.24).

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018. *Joint Publication 3-07.3 Peace Operations* | Public Intelligence.

⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d. *Terminology* [WWW Document]. United Nations Peacekeeping. URL <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology> (accessed 8.2.24).

Executive Summary

Africa's contribution to the climate crisis is minimal, accounting for only global 4% of CO₂ emissions. Nevertheless, it is the most vulnerable continent to the severe consequences of this crisis. The limited resilience and adaptive capacity of many African countries further worsens their vulnerability in the face of climate change. The situation becomes more concerning when one considers that around half the country's most vulnerable to the climate's increasing volatility are also witnessing with armed conflict.¹ It is no coincidence that UN Peace Operations are often deployed in regions grappling with both conflict and climate stressors, including environmental damage from climate change. Looking at the main climate peace security risks and finding gaps in current responses leads to a new way of combining climate responses and peacebuilding. This guidebook does not suggest that missions should be directly undertaking climate action, which may be beyond the scope of their mandates and competencies. However, they should integrate environmental and climate-related considerations into their work, when analyzing conflict risks, drivers of armed violence and planning for protection activities.

The Sixth Assessment Report of Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), titled, "Climate change 2022: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability," emphasizes the urgency of incorporating adaptation into climate responses for sustaining peace.² This acknowledgment reflects heightened awareness of the risks associated with climate change in efforts to consolidate and sustain peace. The UNSC on its part has included climate related language in the mandates of a number of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, particularly in African countries most exposed to climate change.³

In addition, the UN established the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) in 2018. This interagency initiative includes the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the Department of Peace Operations (DPO).

The primary goal is to build capacity to systematically analyze and address climate-related peace and security risks within the UN and beyond⁴. Furthermore, the COP27 Presidency launched the Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) initiative, with the aim of ensuring that integrated climate responses contribute to sustaining peace, in line with national ownership and context specificity⁵.

This guidebook aims to fill a gap in the programming of UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions, by helping practitioners better understand how climate change risks interact with peace and security. It provides information for peace operations on integrating climate and conflict risk analysis and planning, as appropriate, as well as supporting impactful implementation of their mandates. Moving forward, personnel of UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Missions should have better tools and training to support national governments, to integrate an environmental and climate lens into analysis, planning, operations, programming and performance assessments.



¹ Scartozzi, C.M., 2022. Climate-Sensitive Programming in International Security: An Analysis of UN Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions. *International Peacekeeping* 29, 488–521

Sarfati, A., 2022. Toward an Environmental and Climate-Sensitive Approach to Protection in UN Peacekeeping Operations. International Peace Institute.

² Hans-Otto Pörtner, Roberts, et al., 2022. Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Working Group II Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

³ NUPI, 2022. Climate Security Language in UN Peace Operation’s Mandates. Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

⁴ Climate Security Mechanism, 2021. Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) Progress Report 2021. New York.

⁵ COP27 Presidency Initiative Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) https://www.cccpa-eg.org/pdf_read_download.php?type=read&new-FileName=Climate+Responses+for+Sustaining+Peace+%28CR-SP%29+COP27+Presidency+Initiative&file=2601_05040020.pdf

Acronyms

AU	African Union
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
CAR	Central African Republic
CCCPA	Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
COP UNFCCC	Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CRSP	Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace
CSM	Climate Security Mechanism
DPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
DPPA	United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
DRC	The Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PKO	Peacekeeping Operations
PEO	Peace Enforcement Operations
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SPM(s)	Special Political Missions
SPM(s)	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNISS	United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOWAS	United Nations Office in West Africa and the Sahel
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSOM	The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia



Introduction



Climate-related security risks are context-specific and are shaped by social, economic and political conditions. Such risks are not inevitable, but are significantly influenced by human actions. These phenomena tend to mutually reinforce each other in a vicious cycle. Climate shocks along with environmental damage can exacerbate conflict drivers, especially when it converges with other political, social, and economic pressures. Armed conflict, in turn, can intensify environmental degradation and hamper climate action. Additionally, the low readiness and coping capacity among host populations highlight the need for climate responses to enhance the sustainability of peacebuilding programs.¹

The Egyptian Presidency of the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) launched the “Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP)” initiative, aiming to ensure that integrated responses to climate change contribute to sustainable peace and development, while aligning with national ownership and context specificity. This marks the first initiative in this area proposed by the presidency of a COP.² Furthermore, one of the key outcomes of COP27 regarding climate financing for countries at the frontlines of the climate crisis, was the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, designed to support nations most vulnerable to and affected by the impacts of climate change. This Fund is a promising vehicle for unlocking financial resources for vulnerable countries in Africa, including those experiencing conflict.³

At the continental level, the African Union (AU), is increasingly recognizing the impact of climate threats on peace and security. For example, the AU communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council during its 1051st session in November 2021, highlighted the importance of, “adopting a climate-sensitive planning dimension in efforts to maintain the peace.”⁴ In November 2023, the AU further

addressed the climate change, peace and security nexus with a communiqué and an update on the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission.⁵ The African Climate Security Risk Assessment Report released on 8 December, 2023 at COP28, by the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the African Union Commission in partnership with adelphi and CCCPA, provides the basis for the development of the Common African Position on the topic. The Assessment provides an in-depth analysis of key climate security risks from a continental perspective and emerging good practices to address them.⁶ Furthermore, the AU Commission has developed a 10 year “African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032)”, a policy framework endorsed by the African Union that outlines the linkages between climate and security and underscored the centrality of regional response to climate change to improve Africa’s adaptive capacity and ensure long-term climate-resilient development.⁷

In addition, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), in its capacity as the Secretariat of CRSP, launched the flagship training program “Climate Responsive Programming for Sustaining Peace” in 2023. This is the first-ever training to be developed in Africa, seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding on how to assess and respond to climate-induced risks in a holistic and integrated manner with a view to advance climate adaptation, resilience and peacebuilding on the continent, while grounding analysis and response in context-specificity and national ownership.

This guidebook outlines the core definitions and key concepts of climate, peace and security nexus, while also examining the evolving environmental landscape in fragile and conflict settings in Africa. It identifies the relevant pathways linking climate change, peace and security, particularly relevant to peace operations. The guide examines existing UN Peace Operations where climate peace and security is integrated in the missions’ mandates, identifying potential gaps for future interventions. Additionally, it provides a practical guideline for practitioners, outlining how to integrate a climate lens into peacebuilding in a more complete and sustainable way.



¹ Scartozzi, C.M., 2022.

² CCCPA, 2022. Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP) Initiative to be launched at COP 27.

³ Ciacci, A., 2023. Understanding the Stakes of Climate Talks for Countries in Conflict. Crisis Group.

⁴ African Union - Peace and Security Council, 2021. Communiqué of the 1051th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held on 26 November 2021

⁵ African Union – Peace and Security Council, 2023. Communiqué of the 1184th meeting meeting on the African Continental Climate Security Risk Assessment Report on Climate Change, Peace and Security Nexus, and the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Study on the Nexus between Climate, Peace and Security. November 2023

⁶ Climate Diplomacy, 2023. African Climate Security Risk Assessment. The report itself was requested by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) and is the result of the collaboration between the African Union Commission for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS) and adelphi.

⁷ The African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032).

A. BACKGROUND

In recent years, the relationship between climate change, peace, and security within the framework of United Nations Peace Operations has garnered significant interest. Numerous studies and reports underscore the role of climate and environmental risks in shaping the mandates and operational strategies of UN Peace Operations, particularly those deployed in countries highly vulnerable to climate change, notably in Africa. According to the ND-Gain Index, four out of six UN Peace Operations in Africa are stationed in countries most exposed to climate change.¹

In the late 1990s, the Security Council authorized a number of UN missions to end civil wars and promote peace on the continent. Large UN forces were deployed to countries like Sierra Leone and Sudan. Despite challenges, several of these missions successfully ended insurgencies, supported elections, and built peace in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire—a success for the UN compared to the failed peacekeeping efforts in Rwanda and Somalia in the earlier 1990s.²

Since 2000, however, the number of violent conflicts and conflict-related deaths has surged again. Today's conflicts tend to be complex, often involving not only state armies that fight across borders or with insurgents inside borders, but also paramilitary groups, ethnic militias, criminal gangs and mercenaries. By far, most of today's conflicts take the form of intrastate civil wars (with or without state involvement), with consequences that spill over borders as they disrupt livelihoods and force people to flee their homes.³

The mandates of several UN Peace Operations, including those in Africa, have acknowledged the realities of climate change, although translating this into action has been slow and uneven.⁴ Existing literature emphasizes that climate-sensitive programming within UN Peace Operations is shaped by primary factors such as the climate vulnerability of host countries and the limited coping capacity of local populations to adapt.⁵ Notably, there is less of a focus on conflict analysis and security implications. It is increasingly clear that integrated approaches and strong partnerships are needed to find sustainable, cross-cutting solutions.⁶ One

of the challenges for policymakers and practitioners in the UN system has been to identify entry points for managing the adverse effects of climate change on peace and security. Another has been to prepare for and respond to the humanitarian consequences of increasingly severe extreme weather events.

In 2018, the UNSC began incorporating climate change language in resolutions for peace operations. These resolutions often urge the UN and the host government to assess and manage risks related to climate change and other environmental factors.⁷ Some resolutions also mention how climate change can affect the stability of the host country. In 2022, some mandates added new text referencing the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. In general, many UN peace operation mandates have included climate change language.

¹ Maertens, L. Shoshan, M., 2018. Greening Peacekeeping: The Environmental Impact of UN Peace Operations.

McDonald, M., 2023. Immovable objects? Impediments to a UN Security Council resolution on climate change. *International Affairs* 99, 1635–1651.

Harper, E., Day, A., 2023. Climate change in the Security Council: Obstacles, opportunities, and options. *Climate Diplomacy*.

Sikorsky, E., Femia, F., Hugh, B., 2023. Climate change and fragility: improving early warning and climate-proofing development and conflict interventions, in: *Handbook of Fragile States*. Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 206–221.

² ND-Gain Index, 2024. ND-GAIN Country Index. ND-Gain.

United Nations Peacekeeping, 2024. Where We Operate. United Nations Peacekeeping

³ Gowan, R., 2023b. What Future for UN Peacekeeping in Africa after Mali Shuttles Its Mission? Crisis Group.

⁴ Vos, Rob, Jackson, Julius, Marco V Sanchez, "Sowing the seeds of peace for food security: Disentangling the nexus between conflict, food security, and peace," FAO, Rome 2017.

⁵ McDonald, M., 2023

International Affairs, 99(4), 1635-1654. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/99/4/1635/7180159>.

Scartozzi, C.M., 2022.

Sarfati, A., 2022.

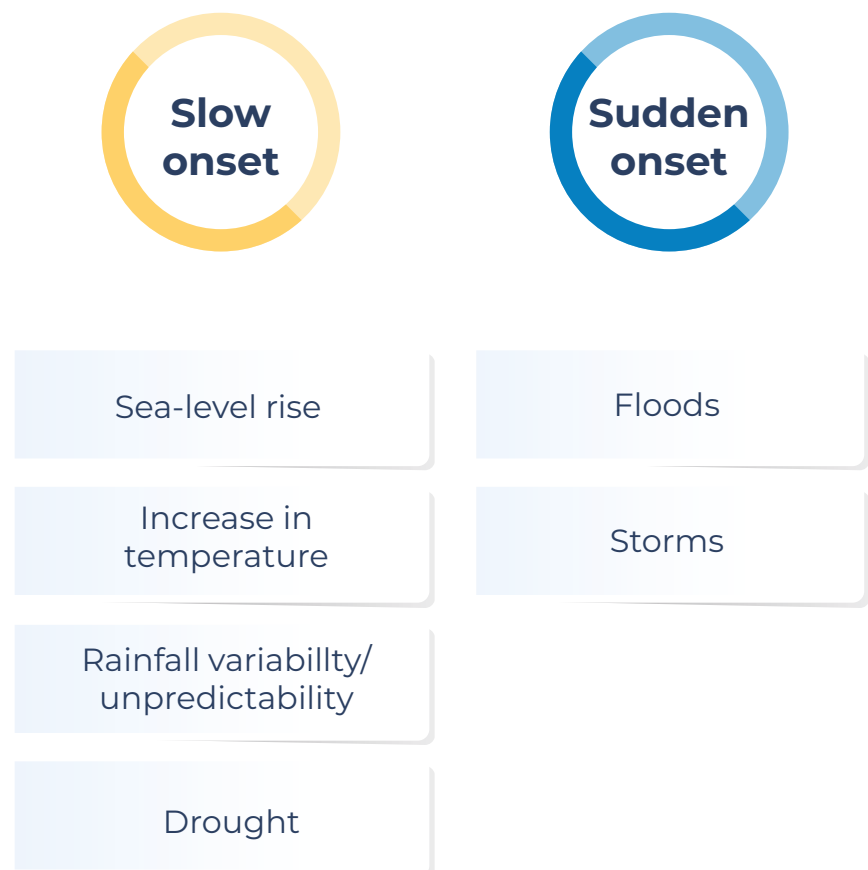
⁶ Ibid.


⁷ Broek, E., Hodder, C., 2022. Towards an Integrated Approach to Climate Security and Peacebuilding in Somalia. SIPRI.

B. CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY PATHWAYS

Climate change impacts take on several different forms. Some are highly visible and more immediate, such as extreme weather events. These are often referred to as sudden onset stressors/shocks. However, some others are longer term, such as drought or sea level rise, these are called slow-onset events.

FIG. 1 CLIMATE INDICATORS





Our understanding of peace and security today recognizes that peace entails more than the absence of armed conflict. Insecurity exists in many shapes and forms - from political insecurity to economic insecurity, to community and personal insecurity - and at multiple levels - international, regional, national, local, and within households. In practice, this means that sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.¹

SIPRI and other organizations have conceptualized ‘pathways’ to help policymakers navigate the complex relationships between climate change, peace and security.² Additionally, the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) has developed several conceptual tools to enhance coordination and foster a shared understanding within the UN system regarding the assessment of climate-related security risks and to cultivate a collective comprehension of the contextual pathways through which climate change impacts security.³ This can also be used to inform decision making for peace-operations in conflict-affected and climate exposed regions.

For example, resource scarcity, exacerbated by environmental degradation and climate change, can be a critical driver of conflict. In regions like the Central African Republic (CAR) and Mali, non-state armed

groups have exploited resource scarcity, further driving conflict. The Séléka armed groups in the CAR and Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in Mali have positioned themselves as “guardians” of transhumance corridors, destabilizing traditional governance mechanisms between farmers and herders.⁴ This situation highlights the need for UN Peace Operations to integrate environmental and climate-related considerations into their conflict analysis and planning processes to address these challenges effectively. For example, in CAR, Mali, and South Sudan, UN peace operations have supported dialogue between farmers and herders to prevent violence on transhumance migration routes, including by organizing pre- and post- migration conferences, supporting communities in agreeing on migration routes, and bolstering traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms.

The nature of the interlinkage between conflict and rising levels of food insecurity have also played into changing climate, peace, and security dynamics. After significant declines overall since 1990, the prevalence of undernourishment worldwide has recently begun to rise again. The IPC Acute Food Insecurity (IPC AFI) classification in 2021-2023, estimated that 82 percent of 149 million Africans facing acute food insecurity are in conflict-affected countries.⁵

¹ Sarfati, A., 2022

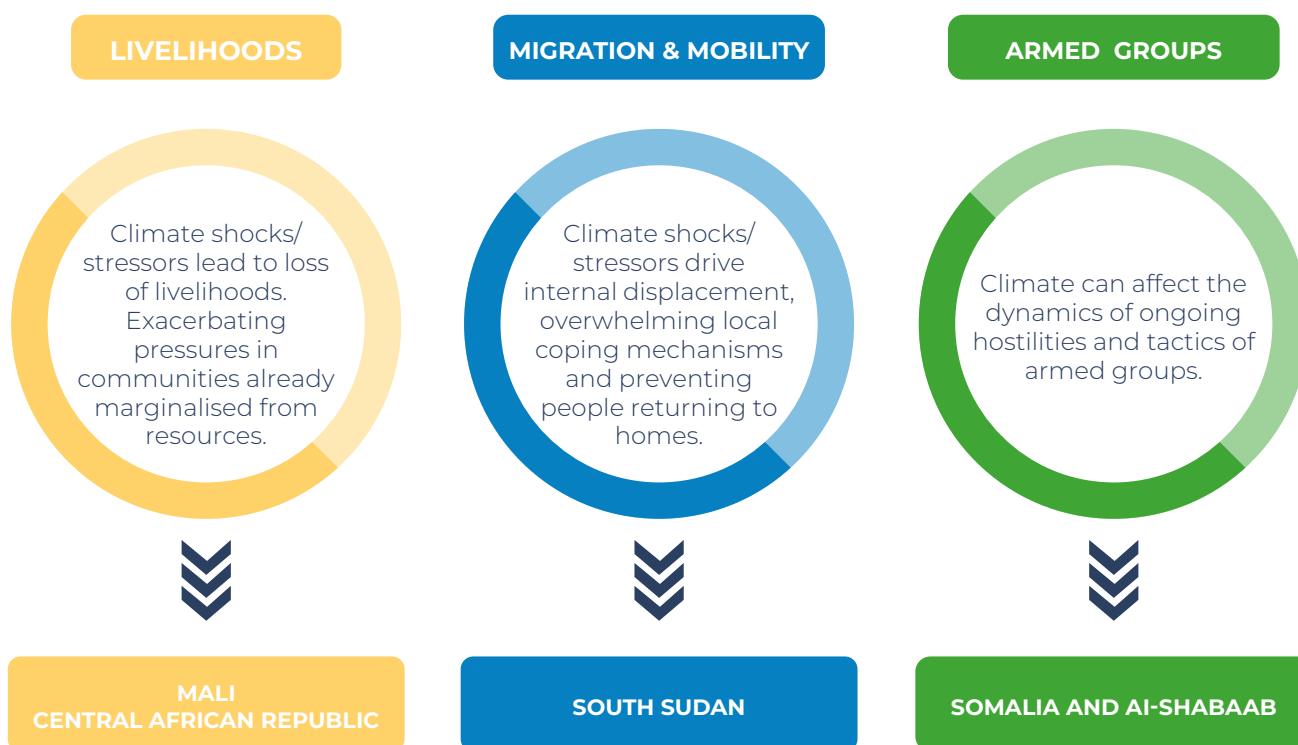
² Ibid.

³ The Climate Security Mechanism- Conceptual Approach. https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/csm_toolbox-2-conceptual_approach.pdf

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Unresolved Conflicts Continue to Drive Africa’s Food Crisis, Africa Center for Strategic Studies, October 16, 2023. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/ipc-overview-and-classification-system/ipc-acute-food-insecurity-classification/en/>

FIG.2 CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY PATHWAYS



Climate change risks frequently coincide with pre-existing fragility (such as poverty, social tensions, weak governance, resource scarcity, etc.) and heightened climate vulnerability, thus creating “climate security pathways”, where climate change exacerbates pre-existing challenges, increasing conflict risks and limiting climate adaptation and mitigation abilities, as well as triggering climate-induced displacement, worsening livelihood conditions and placing further strains on governments to adapt. Despite increased efforts to achieve a better understanding of the climate, peace and security pathways, many considerable knowledge gaps persist in terms of understanding and analyzing the the climate, peace and security nexus. These gaps, consequently, hinder policy development and the programming of robust climate-sensitive peacebuilding responses.

A recent study conducted by CCCPA and NUPI contends that such knowledge gaps are created by the disconnect between climate adaptation and mitigation communities and those related to conflict resolution and sustainable peace and development. The study proposes that such knowledge gaps impact the programming of climate and peacebuilding projects, creating “operational knowledge gaps”.¹ The paper suggests that such gaps could be addressed through different operational approaches, such as improved project design that leverages the co-benefits of climate adaptation for sustaining peace while addressing the root causes for conflict, clearer operational guidance on the field through better project testing, and attaining better precision of key concepts to improve project categorization, evaluation and guidance.

It is crucial to remember that the paths are not predetermined. It is not a set journey but rather shaped by the choices people and communities make. In simple terms, climate change and environmental problems do not directly cause conflict—people do. How people respond, whether they work together or compete, and sometimes turn to violence depend on factors like politics, security, society, and the economy. Other factors such as power, agency, identity, and gender also matter. Recognizing that the outcomes are not decided in advance but depend on human choices is essential. It opens up opportunities to take actions like mitigation, adaptation, and prevention measures.²

¹ Iversen, T.O. and Khalifa, F., 2023. Knowledge Gaps in the Nexus of Climate, Peace and Security
² Eklöv, K., et al., 2022. Security Risks of Environmental Crises: Environment of Peace (Part 2). SIPRI, Stockholm.



C. THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND CLIMATE-RELATED SECURITY RISKS

The UN Security Council's heightened focus on climate-related risks reflects an evolving understanding of the impact of climate change on conflict and security dynamics. Initially, from 2009 to 2016, the UNSC primarily recognized climate change's impact on development and peacebuilding in Africa. However, in 2017, following a report from the Secretary-General regarding the UN Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Council shifted its approach. It started to emphasize the necessity for comprehensive risk assessments and effective strategies for managing risks associated with the impacts of climate change. This marked a significant evolution in the Council's stance, acknowledging the deeper interplay between climate change and regional stability.¹

This shift is evident in the Council's focus on African regions such as the Lake Chad Basin, West Africa, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Security Council acknowledges the impact of climate change on security dynamics, emphasizing the need for comprehensive risk assessment and adaptation strategies in conflict-affected regions such as those just mentioned.² However, there are ongoing divisions within the Council regarding climate change's role in security, with some member states opposing its integration into the Council's work.

³³ McDonald, M., 2023.

³⁴ Security Council Report, 2021. The UN Security Council and Climate Change (No. 2), 2021. Security Council Report.



This opposition underscores the complexities of addressing climate change within the sphere of international security, pointing to the need for a nuanced and multi-faceted approach that takes into account the various political and geographical contexts.

Since 2017, there has been a noticeable increase in UNSC resolutions (i.e. updated POs mandates) that emphasize the importance of assessing and managing climate risks in Peace Operations.³ This heightened awareness is especially noticeable in regions like the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. The use of climate-related language in UN Peace Operations has become more common, showing a greater attention to how climate change, peace, and security are interconnected. The mandates of several important UN peace missions have changed to explicitly acknowledge and deal with the effects of climate change and environmental factors on stability and security (See Annex I below).

The UNSC's role in addressing climate-related security risks continues to be marked by ongoing divisions and debates, putting limitations on the Council's role in this arena.⁴

¹ McDonald, M., 2023.

² Security Council Report, 2021. The UN Security Council and Climate Change (No. 2), 2021. Security Council Report.

³ McSecurity Council Report, 2021. The UN Security Council and Climate Change (No. 2), 2021. Security Council Report

⁴ Gowan, R., 2023a. How the UN Can Make the Most of the New Agenda for Peace, Crisis Group



D. FROM LANGUAGE INTO ACTION IN UN PEACE OPERATIONS

The best way to prevent, mitigate or manage climate-related security risks is to address their root causes – ensuring that systems, communities and states can manage different types of stresses and shocks from the onset. In already fragile or conflict affected contexts, understanding these compound risks can also help peacebuilders identify new opportunities to prevent conflict and sustain peace, as well as to support more effective action on climate adaptation and mitigation.¹

Identifying and addressing climate-related security risks is essential for peace operations in accordance with their mandates, to support holistic conflict prevention and enable inclusive, sustainable peace. Opportunities for integrated action exist through a) policy, b) planning and c) programming in the areas of climate adaptation and mitigation, peacebuilding and development. Climate adaptation can help bring conflicting groups together to work towards a common goal of achieving sustainable use of land or water for the whole community. Inclusive approaches with a gendered and social inclusion lens can unlock potential women, communities in vulnerable situations, and others who possess critical localized knowledge for better climate adaptation efforts.² For instance, the project “Infrastructures for Peace and Environmental Peacebuilding in Hirshabelle and Galmudug State, Somalia” was undertaken with the aim of providing support for local mediation activities and environmental peacebuilding, focusing on conflict transformation and environmental peacebuilding in both towns. The project provides strategic coordination workshops and capacity development workshops involving civil society actors, members of the regional Insider Peacebuilders Networks (IPNs), and government representatives.³

³⁹ UNEP, EU, 2022. Addressing Climate-related Security Risks: Conflict Sensitivity for Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Livelihoods - Guidance Note. United Nations. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40330/security_risks_guidance.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

⁴⁰ Security Council Report, 2022.

⁴¹ SIPRI, 2022. SIPRI briefs UN Security Council on the relationship between climate, peace and security.



A 29 November, 2022 Arria-formula meeting focused on how climate, security, and peacebuilding interact, concurring to a large extent with the overall narrative and focus of the CRSP initiative.⁴ The discussions at this meeting addressed a number of issues that can further support efforts to operationalise the climate, peace and security nexus. The issues highlighted included supporting peace talks that also address climate related dimensions, involving women and young people in peace efforts related to climate, and encouraging the UN Peacebuilding Architecture to support projects promoting climate resilience in places affected by conflict.

Such an approach could create more opportunities for engagement with host governments, regional organizations, and partners to strengthen resilience and adapt to climate-related security risks in ways that contribute to building and sustaining peace. However, these initiatives remain ad hoc. They often depend on whether UN mission leaders or individuals in key positions in the mission or at headquarters prioritize environmental and climate-related issues, as well as the availability of dedicated expertise and a relevant mandate.⁵ For example, in countries like CAR and South Sudan, missions deploy military patrols along transhumance migration routes to defuse tensions and prevent altercations, though more data is needed to allow missions to understand how climate conditions are changing migration patterns.⁶

A study by SIPRI, into climate-related security risks and peacebuilding in Somalia suggests that some UN agencies are generally well equipped to respond to natural hazards such as flooding and droughts and to provide adequate humanitarian assistance.⁷ For conflict-affected states, these responses become ever more complex and hindered by conflict dynamics and complicated politics. This has created new demands on peace efforts. UNSOM has adapted to the complex situation on the ground, addressing the rising frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and their human impacts. In Somalia, UN actors collectively form an integrated mission or office, as explained in the Somalia Case Study below.

Building the capacity of missions requires increased information exchange among mission leaders. Despite variations in context and histories among UN missions, the ability of missions in Somalia to manage climate-related risks and assess the security consequences of climate change relies heavily on effective mission leadership.

¹ UNEP, EU, 2022. Addressing Climate-related Security Risks: Conflict Sensitivity for Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Livelihoods - Guidance Note. United Nations. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40330/security_risks_guidance.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

² Security Council Report, 2022.

³ Berghof Foundation, 2023. <https://berghof-foundation.org/work/projects/infrastructures-for-peace-and-environmental-peacebuilding-in-galmudug-and-hirshabelle-state-somalia>

⁴ SIPRI, 2022. SIPRI briefs UN Security Council on the relationship between climate, peace and security.



THE WAY FORWARD

There has to be a political will for peacekeeping and special political missions to have more impact on climate, peace and security in line with their relevant mandates. The situation has certainly progressed from when the blue helmets traditionally only focused narrowly on security. Now, their work includes activities aimed at fostering long-term peace and development.⁷

Adopted by the UNSC in 2013, the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) aims to address the underlying causes of crisis in the region, with initial focus on climate change.⁸ The 2018 UNISS Support Plan aims to increase resilience to climate change and provide greater access to renewable energy. Collaborations involving UN agencies, governments, and stakeholders have led to various initiatives in the Sahel. These include hybrid power plants, digital hubs, and ecovillages. There are also projects to support rural and peri-urban businesses, expand agricultural value chains, and develop infrastructure in Guinea and Burkina Faso, and Niger, enhancing community income and municipal revenues, particularly benefiting women and those with reduced mobility.⁹

However, how well climate change is addressed in UN Peace Operations varies, and some conclude it is because of “institutional decoupling,” where organizational structures and practices diverge due to external pressures.¹⁰ For example, UNOWAS has been studying climate-related risks in West Africa and the Sahel since 2018. They have done assessments in countries like Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Liberia, and Nigeria. The lessons learned from these studies will be used with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to create national adaptation plans. In June 2022, ECOWAS adopted its first Regional Climate Strategy Action plan on adaptation, mitigation and cross cutting actions for 2022-2030.

Conflict-sensitive programming is a work in progress, with some UN Peace Operations (POs) coming close to meeting Security Council requests. However, POs have not fully fulfilled recommendations, and the lack of clarity in relevant Security Council mandates, political will, and expertise on the climate, peace and security nexus hinders progress. Awareness exists, but meaningful action is lacking, often initiated by UN agencies rather than mandated actions within POs.¹¹

⁵ Sarfati, A., 2022.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Eklöv, K., Krampe, F., 2019. Climate-related Security Risks and Peacebuilding in Somalia. SIPRI, Stockholm

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UNSC, 2013. Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Sahel Region (No. S/2013/354). United Nations, New York.

¹⁰ UNDP, 2021. A Regeneration: Implementing the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS): UNDP's contribution. United Nations

¹¹ Scartozzi, C.M., 2022.

Guidelines for Practitioners

In reality conflicts are complex and dynamic, and can include multiple elements at any given point of time. Conflicts have different levels of intensity and go through cycles of peace and stability. To help assess climate-related conflict risks, these guidelines consider the following steps, which are based on four helpful toolkits and strategies, provided by the CSM, including the UN Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies, as well as Implications of Climate Change for Mediation and Peace Processes.¹ Practitioners in peace operations should also speak directly to communities affected by climate change and conflict, for a comprehensive understanding and integration into the analysis (See above for Climate Security Pathways).

Note: : *These categories are interrelated and should be considered comprehensively for effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding.*

¹ DPPA, 2020. UN Conceptual Approach to Integrating Climate-Related Security Risk Assessments. United Nations, New York.



STEP

1

Integrating the needs of local communities

A holistic approach is needed to ensure the needs of local communities are prioritized in the responses to the complex challenges facing UN Peace Operations. Such an approach should bring together different actors to find integrated solutions that address these needs and strengthen the resilience of these communities. Since challenges vary widely, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Context-specific solutions should focus on prevention rather than just quick responses.

A. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Factor	Example	Assessment questions
Economic considerations	Education, knowledge and skills, poverty, basic income and employment	Understand whether they are regular or irregular; and whether they come from one or more sources.
Food Security	Access to basic nutrition	What's the availability, access, utilization and stability and quantity, quality, safety and preference?
Health	Access to safe water	Does the area's physical infrastructure support basic services like health, water and sanitation? ¹
Environmental considerations	Sustainable use of natural resources	Assess the availability and state of natural resources, including the different pressures (internal and external) that affect those resources and ecosystems, such as pollution or land use. ² What are the current and future impacts of climate change on resources?
Inclusion of local knowledge	Access to and inclusion of local knowledge and experiences in assessing climate, peace and security considerations	Assess the degree to which the knowledge and experience of indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society are integrated in the scientific and bureaucratic knowledge forms that international organizations and national governments rely on. ³
Participatory approaches	Inclusion of structural and cultural considerations in the design and implementation of climate, peace and security responses.	Understand whether the context-specificity and sustainability of environmental peacebuilding efforts is ensured through the inclusion of participatory and social learning approaches.

¹ DPPA, 2020. The lack or existence of infrastructure such as water irrigation impacts the livelihoods of population groups in different ways. It is also important to measure the different levels of access to infrastructure; for example, user fees might exclude poor population groups.

² Ibid. Understanding these differences requires also understanding the rules, regulations, and management mechanisms that control access to natural resources. Will today's infrastructure meet the long-term needs of its users.

³ Iversen, T.O. and Khalifa, F., 2023. Knowledge Gaps in the Nexus of Climate, Peace and Security. [https://www.nupi.no/content/pdf_preview/27846/file/iversen%20and%20Khalida%20\(2023\)%20Knowledge%20Gaps%20Policy%20Paper.pdf](https://www.nupi.no/content/pdf_preview/27846/file/iversen%20and%20Khalida%20(2023)%20Knowledge%20Gaps%20Policy%20Paper.pdf)

B. INTEGRATING GENDER AND YOUTH CONSIDERATIONS

Gender considerations shape the differentiated experiences of individuals when facing the impacts of climate change. Ignoring this relationship may worsen risks in peace settings as well as inequalities for different groups or individuals.¹ Gender also influences how different individuals are affected by and cope with the socioeconomic impacts of armed conflict.

For example, in Somalia, livelihoods are deeply impacted by sudden climate-related disasters like floods or droughts, where most people work in rain-fed agriculture. Women and children are also often the ones who gather firewood for cooking, when these types of disasters strike, they walk longer distances to resources, putting them at risk of sexual and gender based violence or exploitation.²

Around 80 percent of Somalia's 2.7 million displaced communities are women and children, as men tend to stay behind to look after family property.³ According to aid workers, life in the perennially under-funded camps for the displaced is precarious, with donors prioritizing pregnant women and infants when distributing food and other key necessities. Moreover, gendered divisions of labour, which hold women responsible for tasks like fetching firewood, and defective camp infrastructure means that women and girls face an increased risk of being exposed to sexual violence.⁴

Women's exclusion from formal peace processes and peace processes poses challenges for sustainable peace. Therefore, considering intersecting factors like gender, age, and socio-economic status is vital in addressing climate-related security risks in UN Peace Operations.⁵

¹ DPPA, 2020. The lack or existence of infrastructure such as water irrigation impacts the livelihoods of population groups in different ways. It is also important to measure the different levels of access to infrastructure; for example, user fees might exclude poor population groups.

² Ibid. Understanding these differences requires also understanding the rules, regulations, and management mechanisms that control access to natural resources. Will today's infrastructure meet the long-term needs of its users.

³ Iversen, T.O. and Khalifa, F., 2023. Knowledge Gaps in the Nexus of Climate, Peace and Security. [https://www.nupi.no/content/pdf_preview/27846/file/Iversen%20and%20Khalida%20\(2023\)%20Knowledge%20Gaps%20Policy%20Paper.pdf](https://www.nupi.no/content/pdf_preview/27846/file/Iversen%20and%20Khalida%20(2023)%20Knowledge%20Gaps%20Policy%20Paper.pdf)





STEP 2

Applying a climate lens to operational and mandate risk assessments

While climate change is rarely, if ever, the root cause of conflict, its cascading effects are important for UN Peace Operations. Thorough analysis of the pathways of climate-related security risks is crucial to identify situations in which the impacts of climate change can increase security risks. Peace operations should incorporate climate into their existing risk registers.¹

¹ Russo, Jenna, 2022.

A. CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY ANALYSIS AND DATA¹

When climate change combines with other factors, it can create security risks that affect people and communities in different ways. These risks often occur at the local level and can impact livelihoods, natural resources, and community tensions. To understand these risks, analysts must assess the likelihood of climate-related events happening and their effects on the environment, society, and infrastructure. This assessment considers how exposed a community or country is to these events, along with their existing vulnerabilities and ability to cope with them. It is important to assess how these factors interact and reinforce each other. For example, climate events can worsen existing socio-economic and political problems, potentially leading to major changes in human security.²

Examples of climate-related security risks include

- a. Degradation of natural resources leading to conflicts over them, especially when combined with population growth and weak governance.
- b. Increased frequency and severity of climate-related disasters, straining government response capabilities.
- c. Changes in migration patterns increasing tensions.
- d. Migration to vulnerable urban areas increasing crime and instability.
- e. Loss of economic opportunities making people vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups.
- f. Resource scarcity and gender inequalities increasing violence against women and reducing households' ability to cope with shocks.

Understanding these risks and their underlying factors is crucial for advancing climate responses for sustaining peace. Climate security analysis and data are valuable tools for POs to address these challenges.³

¹ Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), Tool Box, Data Sources. UN Data Sources on Climate-related Security Risks.

² DPPA, 2020.

³ Ibid.

FIG.3 CLIMATE, PEACE AND SECURITY INDICATORS





WHICH

climate stressors or shocks are the most relevant?¹

Erratic rainfall, sea-level rise, temperature increase, droughts, floods, cyclones, storms, ecosystem degradation. To analyze climate stressors and shocks in a given area, analysts need to review existing assessments and relevant scientific data.

Data: (IPCC, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, World Bank, Flood and Drought Portal, UNEP, Climate Hazard Centre's CHIRPS rainfall data at a spatial resolution of approximately 5 km) Handbook of Drought Indicators and Indices. WMO and GWP Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP). 2016

WHO

or what is exposed where and when?

Presence of people, livelihoods, natural resources in affected areas, gender breakdowns are useful. Exposure can also be assessed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative data indicating the presence (or absence) of communities and assets in areas likely affected by climate stressors and shocks. In this context, geospatial analysis is important to understand the location of and relationship between ecosystems and natural resources. Where no one and nothing is exposed, there is no risk. .

Data: GADM. 2012. Database of Global Administrative Areas. Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN). 2023. UNHCR)

WHAT

are the key vulnerabilities or coping capacities?

Can the government handle food security, emergency preparedness, and basic service delivery in health, education, water, and sanitation? To best understand stressors and shocks, analysts can also adopt a multi-risk approach and include non-climate-related factors, such as existing conflict or displacement.

Data: Humanitarian Data Exchange, OCHA, Gender Development Index, UNDP, Displacement Tracking Monitor, IOM, UNICEF data on child mortality, IPC Population Tracking Tool. 2023. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

¹ Climate Security Mechanism (CSM), Tool Box, Data. <https://dppa.un.org/en/climate-security-mechanism-toolbox-conceptual-approach>



STEP 3

Strengthening environmental mediation in peace operations

SUPPORTING DIALOGUE

The Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping mandates increasingly emphasize the importance of addressing inter-communal tensions and conflicts.¹ While no current peacekeeping missions have a dedicated mandate to engage in environmental peacebuilding, they are assigned various tasks to support the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of inter-communal violence. Environmental peacebuilding can also be incorporated into other mandated activities, including the protection of civilians, the provision of good offices, and support to reconciliation and mediation.²

¹ Hyman, N. et al., 2020. Preventing, mitigating & resolving transhumance-related conflicts in UN Peacekeeping settings: A survey of practice. United Nations Department of Peace Operations.

² Sarfati, A., 2022. Mediation is identified by Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations as a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The UN's guidance on mediation also emphasizes inclusivity which involves incorporating the perspectives and needs of all parties affected by conflict into both the mediation process and its outcomes, by addressing root causes and ensuring diverse societal views are considered.¹ While not every stakeholder may directly participate in negotiations, inclusive mediation ensures structured interactions to include various perspectives, extending beyond women to encompass all demographic groups, youth, civil society, and professional organizations, with a particular focus on the gender aspect of inclusivity.

Environmental peacebuilding addresses climate change as a problem requiring collective action and highlights the importance of building trust and long-term interactions around resource cooperation. Mediation and dialogue efforts can help conflicting parties to resolve disputes. In some cases, shared natural resources – such as water or land – can facilitate peace making processes by bringing opposing groups together to discuss technical solutions for natural resource use, as opposed to focusing on political or other grievances.²

To strengthen environmental peacebuilding, it is important to integrate resource risk and climate perspectives within UN Peace Operations' mandates as appropriate. Because the mismanagement of resources has been found to increase the risk of conflict relapses, a focus on environmental peacebuilding could help peace efforts address and incorporate resource management strategies.

The United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UNDPPA) has developed a toolbox with some critical factors for integrating climate considerations into conflict analysis.³ These factors assist practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of climate change impacts, their interaction with conflict dynamics, and the interest of conflicting parties in tackling these issues within negotiations or other frameworks. Such climate-informed conflict analysis can also impact the way processes are designed, identify intervention opportunities, and craft a mediation strategy that is both pragmatic both climate and conflict-sensitive.

¹ Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies, UNDPPA, 2017.

² Ibid.

³ The Implications of Climate Change for Mediation and Peace Processes DPPA Practice Note, September 2022.

FIG.4 CLIMATE-INFORMED CONFLICT ANALYSIS FOR MEDIATION

Factors	Description
Climate Change Effects	Assess effects at local, national, and transboundary levels, and across short, medium, and long terms.
Conflict Manifestations	Look beyond immediate conflict signs to assess how climate change might exacerbate or trigger conflicts, focusing on the interaction of climate stressors with existing risks affecting socioeconomic and political conditions for various groups.
Perceptions and Political Narratives	Examine conflict parties' views on climate change effects on their cause and situation, including political elites' motivations for action or inaction.
Inclusion of Diverse Interlocutors	Include civil society, the private sector, and local communities, as they bear the brunt of climate impacts.
Environmental Linkages	Understand the connections between environmental dimensions and the overlay of political and administrative boundaries on ecological systems.
Responses to Climate Change	Evaluate current and potential responses to climate change, assessing their impact on conflict dynamics and potential as mediation entry points.



There are several examples of Africa-based peacekeeping operations supporting dialogue through conferences to prevent violence on transhumance migration routes. There are also examples of operations supporting communities in agreeing on migration routes, and bolstering traditional dispute-resolution mechanisms.¹ In the DRC, MONUSCO has helped efforts to ease tensions between different communities by mediating and involving the community. In Darfur, UNAMID is assigned to help mediate conflicts between communities. In Abyei, UNISFA is encouraged to cooperate with local leaders to keep peace and encourage reconciliation between different groups.

¹ Ibid. FAO, CGIAR, CARE, 2021. Deploying a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach: Exploring, strengthening and reviving dryland ecosystems. FAO, CGIAR, CARE, Rome, Italy.

B. LEVERAGING COLLABORATION ACROSS THE HUMANITARIAN- DEVELOPMENT-PEACE NEXUS (HDPN)

Collaboration across the peace-humanitarian-development nexus is crucial for addressing complex challenges effectively. Dedicated platforms, such as the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, have focused on advancing the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDPN). The Conclusions of the third edition of the Aswan Forum (2022), paid particular attention to integrating a climate lens into the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas, which informed the development of the CRSP initiative.¹

Peace operations can contribute to such efforts but alone cannot achieve this, highlighting the need for collaboration on climate across these areas with a range of actors and partners. Such collaborations allow missions to combine expertise and conflict-resolution knowledge and enhance their effectiveness on the ground.¹ Some missions are already engaging in this type of cooperation. For instance, MINUSCA is collaborating with FAO and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on transhumance. In a Chad-CAR cross border joint project, the IOM, in collaboration with MINUSCA, has developed a detailed map of pastoral infrastructures along the KaboBatangafo-Kaga Bandoro and the Golongosso– Ndele axes in order to identify transhumance hotspots. MINUSCA's Protection of Civilians (POC) strategy features transhumance and minefields—both of which have environmental components—as drivers of violence, though the mission still mainly examines these issues from a socioeconomic rather than an environmental perspective.³

SIPRI and others recommend that MINUSCA should build on its current efforts to provide safe transhumance corridors and identify conflict-prone transhumance hotspots. Deeper collaboration with specialized agencies working on migration and agriculture could help wider UN integration and coordination. Peacebuilding efforts should continue to support community mediation practices and invest in local peace infrastructures to prevent violent conflict and resolve tensions between farmers and herders.⁴

¹ Aswan Forum Conclusions, 2022. <https://www.cccpa-eg.org/publications-details/810>

² Hyman, N. et al., 2020.

³ Hyman, N. et al., 2020.

⁴ Sarfati, A., 2022.



STEP 4

Analyzing the impact of climate sensitive interventions

Peace Operations and their partners must be careful not to worsen existing challenges or inflame tensions through insufficient or unfair interventions. As conflict-affected areas are constantly evolving, it is crucial to regularly evaluate the effectiveness and equity of interventions related to climate, peace, and security. To find questions for an impact assessment in a group exercise (for group training purposes), please see Annex II below.

A. DEVELOP SCENARIOS

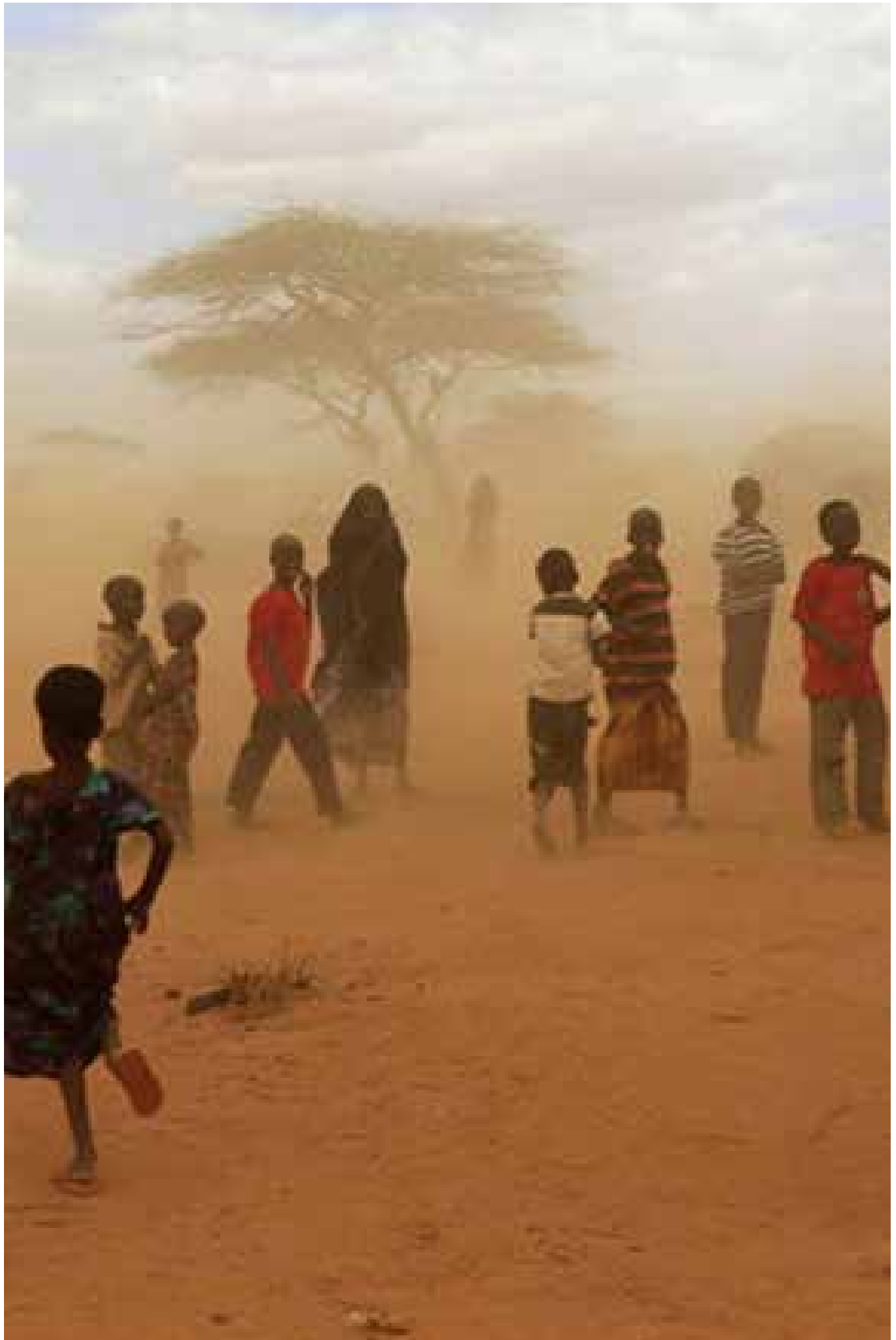
To address uncertainty about future climate change impacts, particularly regarding water resources availability, one approach is to anticipate various scenarios with different sets of solutions.¹ This involves envisioning different potential futures based on identified drivers, dynamics, and behaviours, as outlined in the UNEP Toolkit Addressing Climate-Related Security Risks 2023.²

Scenarios should include various categories, such as, optimistic, pessimistic, mixed or status quo over specific timeframe, such as five years. These scenarios should detail how the political, economic, social and environmental situation has changed and why. These scenarios can then be used to evaluate the effectiveness of peace operations actions, strategies, policies. Ideally, this scenario exercise would involve different stakeholders together and help create shared ownership of the results. However, if time or resources are limited, the exercise can also still be done with a small group.³

¹ DPPA, 2020.

² UNEP, adelphi. 2022. Addressing Climate-related security risks, Guidance notes. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/40330/security_risks_guidance.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

³ Ibid.



Case Studies

**SOMALIA -
THE UN ASSISTANCE
MISSION IN SOMALIA
(UNSOM)**



**SOUTH SUDAN - UN
MISSION IN SOUTH
SUDAN
(UNMISS)**



CASE STUDY

1

SOMALIA - THE UN ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SOMALIA (UNSONM)

The United Nations has recognized the importance of climate, peace and security in Somalia. The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSONM), established in 2013, is an integrated mission that coordinates political and developmental efforts.¹ UNSONM's mandate is to help keep peace and security in Somalia.² However, achieving this goal is complicated by several factors exacerbated by climate change, including heightened conflicts between herders and farmers, increased recruitment and natural resource exploitation by Al-Shabaab, and intensified competition for land resources.³ In 2018, the UNSC formally acknowledged the 'adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of Somalia [and] the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies by governments and the United Nations relating to these factors'.⁴ In 2020, the UN appointed Christophe Hodder as Somalia's first Climate Security and Environmental Advisor.⁵ In 2021, it strengthened this call in Somalia with one of the first Security Council resolutions to officially recognize the link between climate change and stability.⁶

¹ Tarif, K., et al., 2023. Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: Somalia (2023). SIPRI, Stockholm.

Busby, J.W., 2023. Interview with Christophe Hodder, the United Nations Climate Security and Environmental Advisor to Somalia, United Nations Environment Programme. Environment and Security 1, 84–94.


² Eklöv, K. and Krampe, F., 2019.

³ UNSC, 2022. Security Council Extends Somalia Mission Mandate, Adopting Resolution 2657 (2022) by 14 Votes in Favour, 1 Abstention | UN Press.

⁴ E., Hodder, C., 2022.

⁵ Interview with Christophe Hodder, Nairobi, June 2023.

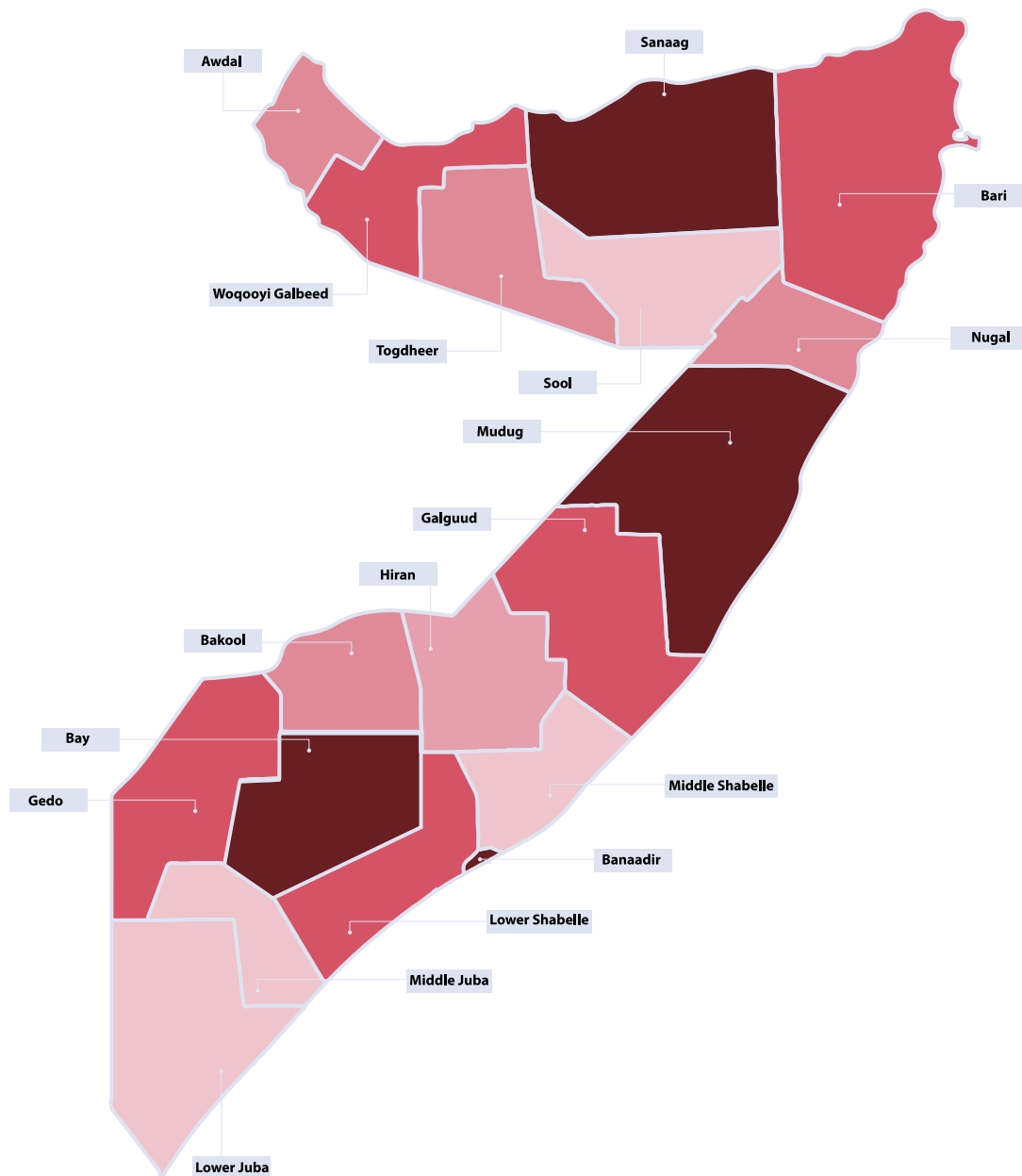
⁶ Resolution 2592 (2021) August 2021. "Further recognising the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, on the stability of Somalia, including through floods, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity."



As a special political mission, UNSOM does not directly implement programs but rather advises and coordinates programs implemented by partners, including the UN country team and national and local actors. Corresponding with the Step 2 (see above), the UN has integrated climate related assessments into its various programs and activities.¹ While the role of the climate advisor was intended to be advisory in nature, he now actively supports UNSOM in implementing its mandate by integrating climate change implications into various initiatives.² Moreover, in correlation with Steps 2 and 3 (see above) the adviser facilitates dialogue and collaboration among various stakeholders, including grassroots organizations, and provides training to government officials and UN staff on analysing and addressing the nexus between climate change and security in development and mediation work.³

UNSOM increasingly integrates climate-related security risks into peacebuilding efforts, using data-driven approaches to connect Somalia's security and climate risks. This strategic analysis and planning has also helped make responses more sustainable, including by mobilizing funding for longer-term resilience building, in addition to the short-term humanitarian response.⁴ Somalia has one of the highest internally displaced populations in the world.⁵

Al-Shabaab's harsh taxation methods, the effects of climate change on livelihoods have displaced over 3.8 million Somalis, or a fifth of the population.⁶ The bulk of the displaced have moved to urban centres in search of an income. For instance, the population of Baidoa, the capital of South West State, almost doubled over the course of three years after an estimated 277,000 people sought refuge there from the drought.⁷ Overall, by 2026, the number of Somalis in urban areas will likely surpass those living in rural areas.⁸



Moving forward, addressing the impacts of climate change in Somalia requires a stronger emphasis on peacebuilding, focusing on enhancing traditional conflict resolution methods and community-based approaches to address environmental challenges. While efforts are already underway, there's room to reinforce integration of approaches by the UN, the Federal Government of Somalia, and external actors.⁹ Corresponding to Step 3.b, it is also crucial to integrate gender and youth.¹⁰

¹ Russo, Jenna, "The Environmental and Climate Adviser in UNSOM," International Peace Institute, October 2022.

² Russo, Jenna, 2022. "Based on UNSOM's mandate, the mission and UNEP have jointly developed the adviser's work around three pillars: (1) mainstreaming the environment and climate throughout the mission's mandated areas of work; (2) coordinating actors working on climate through a "triple-nexus" approach; and (3) supporting the government in developing its climate action plans and policies."

³ Ibid.

⁴ Russo, Jenna, 2022.

⁵ No Going Back: The New Urban Face of Internal Displacement in Somalia, Refugee International, May 25 2023.

Broek E., Hodder, C., 2022.

⁶ Virtual interview with IOM officials, July 2023. 80% of IDPs are in urban centres and over 50% of IDPs in Somalia are in Mogadishu and Baidoa. See also, "Displacement in Somalia reaches record high 3.8 million: IOM deputy director general calls for sustainable solutions", IOM, 28 February 2023.

⁷ Interview with South-West State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Baidoa, March 2023. See also, "Protection & Return Monitoring Network Data", UNHCR, July 2023. One initiative, called Saameynta (Impact in Somali), supported by the UN and Somalia's planning ministry, aims to settle 100,000 people permanently in Baidoa. However, the project lacks funding and struggles to secure land.

⁸ "Urban Population of Somalia", World Bank, 2022

⁹ Broek E., Hodder, C., 2022.

¹⁰ Ibid.

CASE STUDY

2

SOUTH SUDAN - UN MISSION IN SOUTH SUDAN (UNMISS)

UNMISS's mandate is multifaceted, aiming to prevent a return to civil war in South Sudan, to build durable peace at the local and national levels, and to support inclusive and accountable governance and free, fair, and peaceful elections as per the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. The core elements of the mandate include protecting civilians; facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance; supporting peace process; and monitoring, investigating and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses.¹

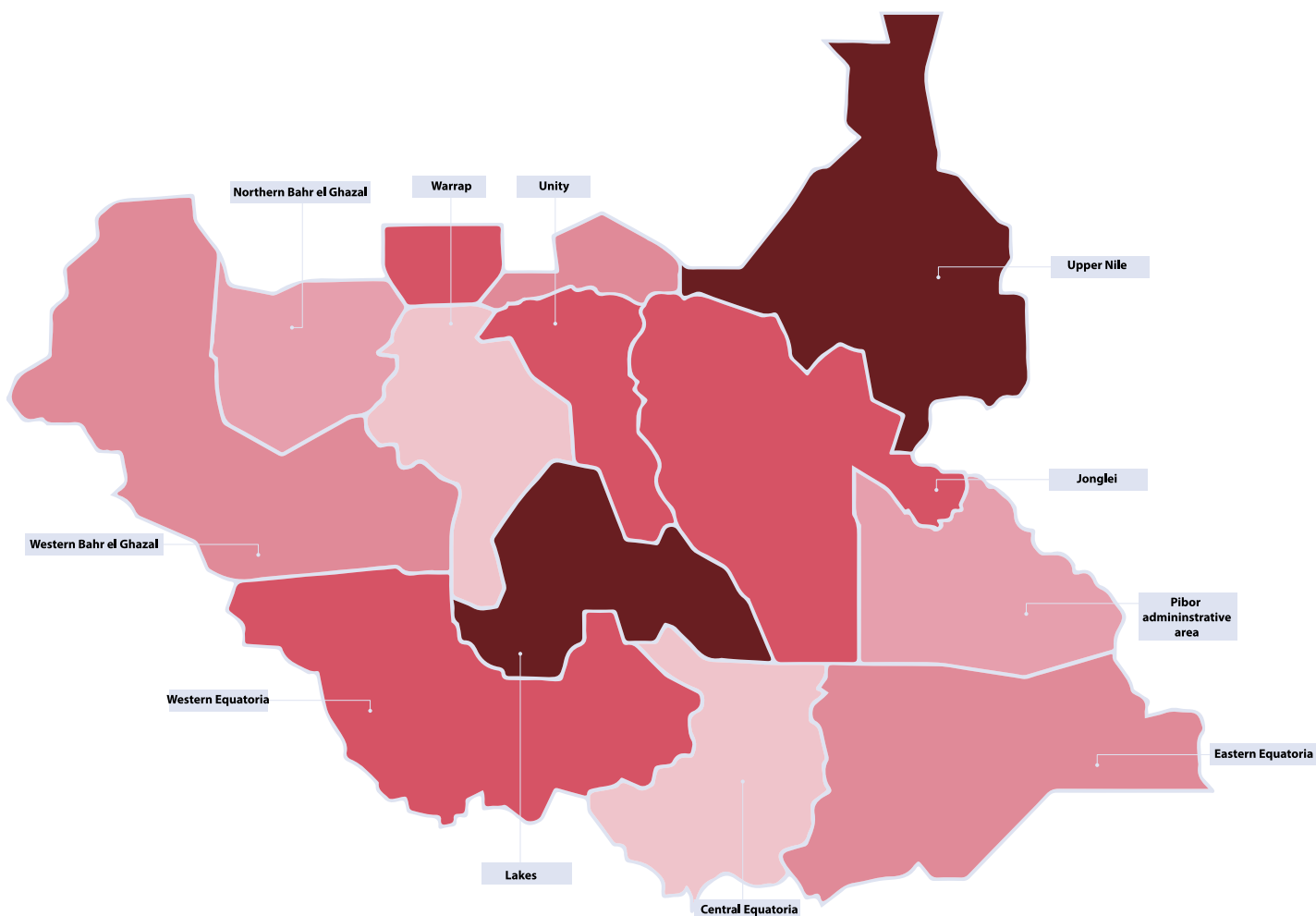
In 2022, climate language in the mandate was notably expanded. The new resolution (2625) referred to climate change in both the introduction and the main sections. Specifically, it directed UNMISS to give, “gender-sensitive risk assessments on the adverse effects of climate change”, to help with humanitarian assistance.²

Factoring environmental considerations into assessment and planning enables missions to prevent conflict more effectively. For example, by incorporating environmental factors into early-warning mechanisms, missions can identify potential hot spots for resource-related violence. This has allowed UNMISS, along with the UN country team, to address climate-related challenges, such as water scarcity during the dry season, by providing alternative water sources for cattle, thereby mitigating tensions within communities.³

¹ Security Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Adopting Resolution 2677 (2023) by 13 Votes in Favour, 2 Abstentions, United Nations, 15 March 2023.

² Engineers with UNMISS built dykes in Beintu in 2020, when massive overflow from the Nile river crashed through the state and never receded. Bateman, Peter, 6 February 2024. 300,000 Lives on the Line – How UNMISS protects Bentiu Residents from Climate Shocks, UNMISS News.

³ Sarfati, A., 2022.



The mission has also established dedicated focal points and task forces on climate-related security issues, and the joint mission analysis center regularly incorporates climate-related security risks into its assessments as per Step 2 (see above). UNMISS's extensive logistics network and the protection it provides for several humanitarian organisations continues to be hugely important.⁴

Over decades, occasional floods and the allure of better grazing ground, as well as the quiet backing of key political figures, have pushed and pulled ethnic Dinka to Equatoria. Anger at these newcomers for arriving and appropriating local resources without permission has been a unifying theme over generations among the region's diverse communities, most of which rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Since July 2022, an estimated 1 million people were affected by severe flooding across South Sudan.⁵ Floods can contribute to violence when combined with other factors.⁶ The most vulnerable, especially women and children, suffer the most from floods and the related violence.⁷ UNMISS is mandated to consider these gender dynamics in its climate-sensitive risk assessments, as outlined in Step 1 above, recognizing that gender inequality and discriminatory norms shape how different individuals experience the impacts of climate change and insecurity.

⁴ Day, A., Hunt, T, C., 2019. South Sudan is at risk of new conflict. Can the U.N. protect its civilians? Washington Post.

⁵ South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (November 2022), UNOCHA, 25 November 2022.

⁶ Janig, Philipp and Hofbauer, Jane and Binder, Christina, Peacekeeping in the Anthropocene: The Effects of Climate Change and Positive Human Rights Obligations in 'Protection of Civilians' Mandates (December 13, 2023). (2022) 26 Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law 602-630, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4687168>.

⁷ In Jonglei state, the White Nile River caused major flooding, pushing armed Dinka herders to move. These herders clash with different ethnic groups in the Equatoria region over cattle, grasslands, and land. Locals accuse migrants and powerful Dinka leaders of planning to take their land. Upset Equatorian groups form militias to force both old and new arrivals out. Crisis Group, 2022c. Floods in South Sudan. Crisis Group.

Conclusion

Addressing climate-related security risks is crucial to stop conflicts and create a lasting, fair peace. This guide emphasizes the importance of flexible analysis, which is tailored to specific needs and contexts. Integration of efforts in policies, planning, and actions across climate adaptation, peace, and development is essential. A comprehensive climate security and integrated risk assessment also requires collaboration among various sectors including development, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and peace and security. While existing literature and toolkits, mainly focus on the recognition of climate change as a security risk, within peacekeeping mandates. This guide, suggests addressing the gap by integrating the following guideline steps into Peace Operations and Special Political Missions;

Step1: Integrating the needs of local communities

Step2: Applying a climate lens to operational and mandate risk assessments

Step3: Strengthening environmental mediation in peace operations

Step4: Analyzing the impact of climate sensitive interventions.



Looking ahead, it is important to ensure that mandates translate into practical on-the-ground actions, especially in response to evolving climate impacts and peacekeeping environments.

The CSM helps UN missions by assessing climate-related security risks and creating strategies to manage them. However, the CSM could work better with standardized risk assessment practices and by following long-term environmental peacebuilding strategies suggested by the Security Council. The United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines (Capstone Doctrine) notes that an integrated mission is a partnership with a shared vision among all UN actors. This collaboration is crucial because an integrated approach to climate and peace operations should be the main strategy moving forward.¹

In July 2023, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched a policy brief titled, “A New Agenda for Peace”. The report is one of a series of papers that the UN Secretary General has circulated to UN member states to lay the groundwork for the Summit of the Future scheduled for September 2024.²

Two key recommendations emerge on climate. Firstly, it recognizes climate, peace, and security as a political priority in mandates of peace operations, and other relevant situations. The Secretary-General encourages a renewed effort to bridge differences among member states to ensure broader support from the Security Council on climate, peace, and security. Secondly, the brief proposes increased cooperation between multilateral bodies in order to better align climate action and peacebuilding efforts. The policy brief advocates for the establishment of a dedicated expert group within the IPCC, new funding within the Peacebuilding Fund for climate finance investments, and the creation of regional and sub-regional hubs on climate, peace, and security. These measures aim to foster collaboration, better coordination, and effective responses to the climate emergency.³ Ultimately, member states will decide how this issue will be tackled at the Summit of the Future and in the Pact that will be adopted on this occasion.

¹ Brusset, E., 2022. Evaluation of the Climate Security Mechanism, Report Submitted to the CSM Joint Steering Committee.

² Coning, C. de, Detzel, J., Højem, P., 2008. UN Peacekeeping Operations Capstone Doctrine Report of the TFP Oslo Doctrine Semina. NUPI, Oslo, Norway.

³ Our Common Agenda: A New Agenda for Peace. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>.

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Annex I

Major

PEACEKEEPING MANDATES THAT INCLUDE CLIMATE

(only included original mandates and the renewing of mandates, not other resolutions)

MINUSCA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic):

Recent mandates, including the November 2023 renewal, have acknowledged the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters on the stability of the Central African region. They emphasise the necessity for comprehensive risk assessments and strategies to support stabilisation and build resilience. The mandate also calls for MINUSCA to consider the environmental impacts of its operations.

UNOCA (United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa):

As of September 2022, a Climate, Peace, and Security Advisor has been deployed to UNOCA, indicating a dedicated effort to integrate climate considerations into regional peace and security strategies.

MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo):

The December 2023 mandate recognizes the adverse effects of climate change and other ecological factors on the stability of the DRC. It includes provisions for addressing environmental damage caused by armed groups and emphasizes expanded renewable energy use in missions.

UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan):

The March 2023 resolution recognizes the effects of climate change on the humanitarian situation and stability in South Sudan, stressing the need for comprehensive risk assessments and management strategies.

UNSOM (United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia):

The October 2023 mandate commends the development of the National Adaptation Plan Framework in Somalia, recognizing the adverse effects of climate change on the country's stability. A climate security and environmental advisor (Chris Hodder) was deployed in the autumn of 2020.

MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali):

Although the mission ended, past mandates highlighted the need to consider the environmental impacts of MINUSMA's operations and the security implications of climate change.

UNOWAS (United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel):

The January 2023 mandate renewal emphasised considering the adverse implications of climate change and assisting in risk assessments and management strategies. The mission deployed a Regional Advisor for Climate Change, Peace and Security in January 2023.

UNAMID (United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur):

The mandate, before its end in 2020, recognized the adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes on the situation in Darfur.

AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia):

The focus has been on emphasising the need for risk assessment and management strategies related to climate change and environmental changes in Somalia.



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