SHRINKING OPTIONS

The Nexus Between Climate Change, Displacement and Security in the Lake Chad Basin

- Amali Tower -
SUMMARY

An estimated 38 million people from diverse ethnicities reside in the Lake Chad Basin. The populations that reside in and around the lake mostly subsist on farming, fishing and pastoral livelihoods. Of this population, about 17 million reside in the conflict affected areas of the Lake Chad Basin, with more than 2.4 million displaced, largely as a result of conflict which broke out in 2009 when the Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad, more commonly known as Boko Haram, launched an insurgency against the Nigerian government, which has since spilled over into Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

While conflict remains the main driver of displacement in the region, the mostly subsistence farming population have been deeply impacted and displaced by climate changes brought on by the lake diminishing over the past 50 years.

In its 5th Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found climate change could increase human displacement as well as indirectly increase the likelihood of conflict by exacerbating poverty and economic instability.\(^2\)

*Climate Refugees* found exactly that when it traveled to the Lake Chad Basin to speak to experts and displaced communities living around the shrinking Lake Chad. Climate change, in combination with political, social, and development challenges has affected people’s lives, which Boko Haram has capitalized upon to feed its insurgency and to create a strategic base of operations and stronghold from which to increase its strength and numbers.

While conflict forced many *out* of the Lake Chad Basin, many were first displaced *within* the basin for reasons of climate change as they searched for sources of water and arable land. That displacement further destabilized populations already vulnerable from poverty, and brought them into further contact with Boko Haram, eventually forcing their flight out of the region completely.

The international community has begun to recognize that underdevelopment and climate change are at the root of the ongoing conflict, which has uprooted people, disrupted economies and thrown the region into chaos. Climate change is a disruptor - it increases the instability of the region, negatively contributes to conflict stressors, including displacement, which left unchecked, threatens to overwhelm weak political, social and economic systems that can further fuel conflict and threaten new ones.

We must recognize that climate change drives human displacement and threatens human security. If the international community is to address the challenges inherent in that reality, then political adaptation, namely recognizing climate change in the security architecture as a threat to international peace and security, will be necessary.
METHODOLOGY

This report is based on field research conducted by Climate Refugees in Niger and Nigeria in July 2017, along with research and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted between March and August 2017 with the aim of producing a report of field findings. Activities included a field mission to Niamey and Diffa, Niger and Abuja and Maiduguri, Nigeria. The following research activities were undertaken:

- A desk review of existing literature on climate change, migration, displacement and climate security.
- KIIs, both remote and in-person, with United Nations and civil society actors, technical agencies, humanitarian and development practitioners, and environmental, legal and academic experts.
- Country visits to Niger and Nigeria involved:
  - Field visits to refugee and internally displaced camps to conduct interviews with a combination of 105 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in Sayam refugee camp and Bouduri IDP camp in Diffa, Niger and Muna Dalti camp in Maiduguri, Nigeria;
  - KIIs in Niger and Nigeria with local staff at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), various civil society staff in local and international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations and political think tanks;
  - Where appropriate, audio taping of interviews.

Field visits were conducted in two of the four Lake Chad Basin countries – Niger and Nigeria. Field visits to Far North, Cameroon were limited by security restrictions due to the ongoing conflict with Boko Haram. Travel to Chad was canceled due to unforeseen logistical constraints. For these reasons, Chad and Cameroon situations were examined through desk research and remote discussions with key informants. The majority of this report will focus on findings in Niger and Nigeria.

Amali Tower, Executive Director of Climate Refugees conducted the remote and in-field research, including the interviews with experts, refugees and IDPs in each country, and report writing. Stephanie David and Jill Blackford provided technical input, analysis and validation of findings, fact-checking and editorial support. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) supported the mission with security and logistical access to staff, camps and displaced populations in Niger and Nigeria.

KIIs with experts and stakeholders in humanitarian, development, legal, policy, government, security and environmental sectors were conducted prior to, during and after field visits, both in-person and remotely.

Camp visits in Niger included Sayam Forage Refugee Camp outside Diffa with refugees from Nigeria, Boudouri Camp in Diffa with IDPs from and around the Lake Chad Basin and Muna Dalti Camp in Maiduguri, Nigeria with IDPs from and around the Lake Chad Basin.

In the camps, focus group discussions were conducted with refugees and IDPs in groups of 10 persons.
at a time. A gender balanced mix of displaced persons from the Lake Chad Basin and rural areas whose livelihoods were primarily agricultural, such as farmers, pastoralists and traders, were targeted for interview due to the hypothesis that this population would be most impacted by climate change.

Focus group discussions were helpful to engage group discussion and were determined to be the most efficient and effective way to collect a range of views in a short timeframe. It also provided the opportunity to gauge opinions and insights into the issues, impacts and changes related to climate conditions, conflict, adaptation and mobility in places of origin.

Displaced persons interviewed were asked about their place of origin, when and why they left, their livelihood activities, their perceptions, knowledge, experiences and adaptations with climate change conditions. Interviews were conducted via translation with interpreters who were neither refugees nor IDPs. Interviews were conducted mostly in Kanuri, with Fulani and Hausa in some cases. Notes were taken and audio and video recordings, with prior consent.

**Research Questions**

The goal of this study was to explore the impacts of climate change on displacement in the Lake Chad Basin and its impacts on Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, countries which host refugee populations, and are all parties to conflict with Boko Haram. Lake Chad Basin residents are dependent on the lake for livelihood, and are increasingly trapped between climate change and insecurity.
Although the Lake Chad displacement crisis is widely understood as a consequence of the conflict with Boko Haram, Climate Refugees wanted to understand what role regional climate change played in the conflict and the lives of residents. The study set out to fill gaps in documenting data of climate displaced persons, identified as a need in the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda, with an aim to better understand:

- Has climate change affected the Lake Chad Basin?
- Has climate change contributed to conflict in the region?
- Does climate play a role in contributing to forced displacement and/or is there a threat of climate change-induced displacement in the Lake Chad Basin?
- Does climate change-induced displacement pose a threat to security in the Lake Chad Basin countries?

**Expert Interviews**

Interview with Anja Stache, Senior Technical Advisor, Program "Sustainable Management of Water Resources in the Lake Chad Basin,” Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, via Skype, 21 April 2017

Interview with Alessandra Giannini, Research Scientist, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, NY, 16 June 2017

Interview with Michael B. Gerrard, Andrew Sabin Professor of Professional Practice, Columbia Law School, New York, NY, 20 June 2017

Group Interview with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Niger Emergency Team, Niamey, Niger, 6 July 2017

Interview with Lucas Honauer, Country Director, Action Contre le Faim (ACF), Niger, Niamey, Niger, 7 July 2017

Group interview with UNHCR staff, Diffa, Niger, 10 July 2017

Interview with Colin Debarbieux, Country Director, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Niger, Niamey, Niger, 13 July 2017

Interview with Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED, CRS) team member, Niamey, Niger, 7 July 2017

Group Interview with CRS Nigeria Agricultural and Livelihoods team, Maiduguri, Nigeria, 18 July 2017

Interview with Zakari G.S. Turaki, Director of Research, Lake Chad Research Institute (LCRI), Maiduguri, Nigeria, 19 July, 2017

Interview with CRS Nigeria Agriculture and Livelihoods Manager, Maiduguri, Nigeria, 20 July 2017

Interview with CRS Nigeria Senior Emergency Program Manager, Maiduguri, Nigeria, 21 July 2017

Interview with Gima H. Forje, Grants and Partnership Officer, TY Danjuma Foundation, Abuja, Nigeria, 24 July 2017

Interview with staff at Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, Abuja, Nigeria, 25 July 2017

Interview with Michael Bollin, Humanitarian working in Chad and Cameroon, via Skype, 4 August 2017

Interview with Emilie Greenhalgh, Deputy Resident Country Director, Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), Niger, Niamey, Niger, 7 August 2017
Interviews with CRS Chad Livelihoods staff, remote, 14 August 2017

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A Note About Terminology

‘Climate Refugee’

Terminology is important, especially in the realm of protection. We fully recognize that the term ‘climate refugee’ has been progressively debated as having no legal basis in international law, since the definition of refugee includes crossing an international border and fleeing for reasons of persecution. We do not contest this and our use of the term, including as our organization name, is purposeful precisely because climate change can no longer be denied as a driver contributing to forcible displacement, both within and across borders, and is a growing form of persecution. Climate change is man-made and is a political reality, not merely an environmental one. States bear responsibility for climate change effects, which adversely oppress the most vulnerable populations on Earth. Our use of the term ‘climate refugee’ is reflective of that political reality, advocating for protections that if gone unheeded could negatively impact global security.

‘Migration vs. Displacement’

In this report we use both ‘migration’ and ‘displacement’ interchangeably to accurately reflect the words used of those interviewed. It should be noted, however, that in the context of this report, both terms are meant to imply a forcible element.

Photography

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I. CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

A vital resource for Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, Lake Chad has shrunk by more than 90 percent in the past 50 years, which experts attribute to rising temperatures and climate change. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) attributes at least 50 percent of the lake’s decrease to the impacts of climate change and climate variability and the other half to population growth and damming. Impacted by huge populations, poor management practices and expanding desertification, the lake has shouldered increased demands for water from the lake’s tributaries.

According to a joint German Development and Lake Chad Basin Commission study, coupled with high levels of rainfall variability and high temperatures, the evaporation of the lake is increasing, posing an acute impact on poor rural households impacted by failed harvests, flooding, destruction of natural vegetation and erosion of farmland. Accordingly, climate change conditions have negatively impacted poverty, social tensions, food security and caused a high number of refugees and displaced amongst the population.

During the 1970’s and 1980’s, a rainfall decrease of ten percent led to droughts, which had a huge impact in almost drying the lake completely, and while the lake has survived these periods, climate change is now exacerbating the shrinking through evaporation and higher temperatures. Approximately twenty million people are dependent on the lake, its floodplains and wetlands, with that number expected to rise to 35 million by 2020. Migrating pastoralists, farmers and fishermen who have seen their income fall by more than half in recent years see migration as their only choice for survival.

The Sahel zone where Lake Chad is located is regarded as a hotspot for security risks associated with climate change, where impacts such as drought, desertification, water scarcity, and extreme
heat further stress countries characterized as weak states. The United States Institute for Peace predicts climate change will adversely alter weather in Nigeria, leading to more droughts and shorter but intensive rainfall, which will contribute to desertification, crop failure, less arable land and conflict.

Climate Refugees spoke to environmental experts at Columbia University’s Earth Institute and the German Development Agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH who along with the Lake Chad Basin Commission have been studying climate change at Lake Chad for years. All agree that climate variability has had a deep impact in the region with climate models forecasting a grim reality.

Upon a field visit to the Lake Chad Basin, Climate Refugees met with Nigeria’s Lake Chad Research Institute (LCRI) who said climate change and damming of rivers have contributed greatly to the lake’s shrinking and subsequent crop failures.

Increasing temperatures pose a huge risk to crop failure in the region, where LCRI said a mere one-degree rise in temperatures above 20 degrees Celsius would result in a 2% loss in crop yields. Temperatures in many places have risen well above 20 degrees though, for example Kanu, Nigeria, which has maintained a 24-degree Celsius temperature over the past ten years. IPCC has projected crop yield reductions by as much as 50% by 2020 in some African countries.

All the experts contend that climate adaptation is key to survival and growth in the area, but as LCRI pointed out, access to the area has been limited by conflict.

Climate Refugees also interviewed 105 refugees and internally displaced persons across Niger and Nigeria displaced from villages surrounding the lake. All participants reported experiencing impacts of climate change for an extended period of time, including unpredictable weather patterns, droughts, longer dry spells, extreme heat, flooding and off-season shorter and more intensive rains, all of which had lasting impacts on Lake Chad, a life source for all residents.

Some spoke extensively of floods destroying crops and initially moving to highlands to take cover, before eventually fleeing the region all together to seek refuge in Diffa, long before the start of the Boko Haram violence.

Others said lower crop yields from overgrazed land, a lack of rains and adverse climatic conditions forced them to move internally within the Lake Chad region in search of more arable land. Still others said they had adapted to the climate changes by anticipating the path and timing of the lake’s shrinking.
Multiple participants reported a swell in mosquitoes and illnesses amongst family and community members, which they self-attributed to climate change. Interestingly, the IPCC, in its Fourth Assessment Report, noted that climate change had altered some disease vectors like mosquitoes that carry diseases such as malaria and dengue fever.\footnote{10}

When the rains eventually came, they filled the lake, but the extreme temperatures led to higher evaporation rates, shrinking the lake yet again. Many said they observed the lake shrinking from day to day.

Local experts in Niger and Nigeria said the data and field evidence indicate that climatic changes are forcing people to migrate. Migration, one expert said, while not a result of traditional persecution in the ways of conflict, is nonetheless environmentally forced upon them for reasons of survival. People flee conflict. People flee persecution. And now, people flee environmental degradation.

“We have no materials to survive the heat. We are forced to sleep outside. Then it’s too cold to survive and we have no materials like blankets.”

*Group Discussion with IDPs from Mafa, Borno State - Muna Dalti Camp, Maiduguri, Nigeria*
II. CLIMATE CHANGE DISPLACEMENT IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

Living and depending upon Lake Chad for livelihood has exposed communities to two simultaneous sources of insecurity: Boko Haram and climate change. Climate change may not have caused the Lake Chad displacement crisis but it has certainly exacerbated it.

The crisis has now displaced 2.4 million people, including 200,000 refugees across the four Lake Chad Basin countries. Long marginalized and underdeveloped, climate change has further eroded the strength and capacity of the Lake Chad Basin, undermining the livelihoods of lake residents and causing human displacement long before the current crisis.

Boko Haram has exploited both of these forces in order to advance its agenda. By exploiting the effects of climate change to seize more land and capitalizing on socio-economic marginalization, the armed group has taken advantage of the historical underdevelopment of the region to maintain de facto control.

The LCRI in Maiduguri, Nigeria has been studying the effects of climate change on the lake since 1976 and said in some instances, Lake Chad Basin residents have been on the move for decades, moving southwards in search of more fertile soil for farming.

The displaced persons Climate Refugees interviewed fled the Lake Chad region due to conflict sometime between 2013-2015 when the Boko Haram insurgency began, but this by no means was their first displacement. Nigerian refugees now seeking refuge in Sayam Forage Refugee Camp outside Diffa, Niger said they experienced some level of environmental displacement within the Lake Chad region long before conflict forced them to flee Nigeria. As early as 1973, some had begun to feel the effects of Lake Chad shrinking which compelled them to move frequently within the Lake Chad Basin in search of water.

As farmers, both Nigerian refugees and Nigerien IDPs told Climate Refugees they were dependent on the rains and lake for water. As the rains decreased, the lake and wells dried up, causing hardship and displacement as farmers were forced to follow the path of the lake for water.
Fishermen were solely dependent on the lake for livelihood, and as the lake receded, many found they were forced to move 3-4 kilometers closer to the lake each year. As they described it, they thought “chasing after water” was normal, if not a natural phenomenon, especially given the long history of fishing across borders where the lake meets Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria.

Climate change threatened livelihoods, and later, lives. As Lake Chad residents moved, so too did Boko Haram, bringing them into contact with the insurgents and their eventual flight from Nigeria.

“It took us to areas where we were deep into trouble with Boko Haram militants. Due to the fact that the river (a source of Lake Chad) was shrinking, we had to move to other places, and then from moving from one place to another, we met our fate. This has displaced us.”

Nigerian refugee from Damasak - Sayam Refugee Camp, Diffa, Niger

Lake Chad shrinking had a direct impact on Boko Haram’s ability to reach and attack lake residents. The shrinking lake exposed lands, creating spontaneous roads that allowed direct access to villages and opportunities for the armed group to attack, raid, kill, forcibly displace, and seize property and land as their base of operation. As noted by the United States in a UN address, “Boko Haram uses the dying lake as a recruiting base, easily exploiting the tens of thousands of displaced people who are searching for a means of livelihood.”

Humanitarian agencies working in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria told Climate Refugees that prior to the Boko Haram crisis, it was not uncommon for agencies to encounter climate-displaced communities amongst its beneficiaries. Later, as the conflict began, the Lake Chad climate variations favored Boko Haram’s goals to continuously seize abandoned patches of land, rendering return moot and economic disruption complete.
A local humanitarian expert in Niger with 24 years experience says there is a link to climate migration in the Diffa region, which is exploited by Boko Haram. Diffa, being in a desert region, is impacted by drought-aggravated desertification, causing the desert to encroach upon villages and crops. He has witnessed cases where farmers and pastoralists are forced to use the same land, that not only puts undue pressure on it, but also leads to overuse and conflict, which displaces the weaker group.

“Although I left because of Boko Haram, many in my village left to Diffa earlier because of flooding.”

Nigerien IDP - Bouduri Camp, Diffa, Niger

While conflict remains the main driver of current displacement in the region, the mostly subsistence farming population have been displaced and deeply impacted by climatic changes in and around the lake basin for years. Displaced fishermen, farmers and pastoralists disclosed struggling against environmental factors for years, even decades, which diminished their livelihood capacities. They adapted to these changes by taking up alternative sources of income such as selling firewood, working in towns as temporary security labor and women as housekeepers. As the rains became increasingly sporadic and the temperatures more extreme, dependency on the lake as the main source of water grew untenable, forcing women to walk 5-10 kilometers or more in search of water. While these environmental factors were not their primary motivators to flee, they were nonetheless influential components in their decision-making.

Rainy season or dry season, they said Boko Haram remained in the lake region, living off the lake for its own survival. When the rains finally came, usually off-season, flooding and crop run-off followed, along with the surety that Boko Haram presence would increase, culminating in restricting resident access and movement as part of its containment strategy.

Some said they had fled primarily because of attack from Boko Haram, but also because their means of livelihood was impacted by climate change:

“We came here looking for support. Not just because Boko Haram drove us away, but because our means of livelihood was cut off, curtailed, because of the lake shrinking, and we have to look for a source of sustaining our lives and families.”

Nigerian refugee - Sayam Refugee Camp, Diffa, Niger
While most fled the area following multiple Boko Haram attacks, many Nigerien IDPs said they fled following government evacuation of the region near the Komodougou River, a fertile area which brings people from all over the Lake Chad area. Many of those interviewed said they felt compelled to evacuate for fear of being presumed Boko Haram militants that would be caught in the crossfire of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy.

Multiple humanitarian experts interviewed in Niger confirmed that anyone who stayed in the region following the state of emergency declared in 2015 was regarded with suspicion as possibly part of or sympathetic to Boko Haram ideology. In a quest to cut off financial flows to Boko Haram, the state of emergency banned the sale of certain agricultural products from the Lake Chad Basin, closed markets, imposed curfew, banned motorbikes, a common means of transport for residents, and resulted in massive displacement of people – which as International Crisis Group notes, while technically voluntary, was practically mandatory in order to avoid military operations, and while officially for security reasons:

“If the relocation of displaced populations aims to cut Boko Haram off from potential support from lakeshore communities. In reality though, it is also driven by political calculation, due to competition for access to the lake’s islands and their natural resources. Some actors, in particular community chiefs, who have land interests on the Lake Chad islands, encourage the relocation of the shoreline populations, especially the Buduma, to the camps close to Kablewa in the interior and to the official site at Sayam Forage.”

Role of Underdevelopment

Climate change adversely impacts already vulnerable populations who have less resources and opportunities for recourse. The Lake Chad Basin has far lower development indicators, with health, education, roads, electricity, water and basic public social services and infrastructure lagging far behind the national averages in each of its four countries. This, compounded by high population growth and environmental factors, puts additional strain on the use of natural resources in the region.

By consequence, underdevelopment in this region has weakened climate change adaptive capacity. For instance, the LCRI said it had developed climate adaptive strategies such as trainings, farming demonstrations, tools, alternative crops and heat-resistant seeds, but the cost of the seeds and innovations proved prohibitive to most farmers. Asked about the technologically advanced seeds and alternative crops, IDPs said they could not afford the seeds and so replanted the same seeds, year after year. So as crops continued to fail and yields declined, most farmers interviewed blamed the lack of water, government support, good land and infrastructure, as contributing elements to their displacement and eventual flight. Multiple traders said they were...
curtailed by the lack of good roads, causing them to be trapped in more ways than conflict.

The LCRI noted that in recent times, farmers in the Lake Chad Basin have been displaced since 2010, long before most fled Boko Haram. Nigeria is under threat of famine, which they said is a result of socio-economic underdevelopment meeting security challenges, and less about crops. Access to farmers, limited due to conflict and poor infrastructure, reduction in cultivation areas due to climate change and Boko Haram land seizure, the cost of the new seeds and the high number of displaced farmers are all contributory factors they cited in the current food crisis.

That underdevelopment has also manifested in limited access to education in the Lake Chad Basin, creating opportunities for Boko Haram to extend its influence and recruit young new affiliates. A World Bank study of the region found evidence of discrimination and limited access to social services such as education as a contributing cause of displacement. Refugees and IDPs displaced by the lake said constant moving and a lack of schools disrupted their children’s educations, effects they now recognize exiled in a foreign country. The same World Bank study found services in displacement camps offered many the opportunity of attending school for the first time.

Experts interviewed said a lack of education is reflected in many of the camps and displaced communities which are teeming with undereducated youth who view their governments with distrust – a fact that Boko Haram capitalizes upon to engender recruitment and support for its cause.

The LCRI said a political byproduct of poverty exacerbated by environmental changes has caused communities lacking options to become vulnerable to militant recruitment and violence. A former Boko Haram member confirmed in an interview with Human Rights Watch that Boko Haram’s recruitment “has nothing to do with religion, but a lot to do with economic resources.”

A Mercy Corps’ study on Boko Haram youth recruitment in Nigeria confirmed that. They found that Nigerians with a deep-seated frustration with the government provides fertile ground for
recruitment based on financial incentives. Boko Haram seized on a lack of economic mobility to offer financial enticements in return for recruitment and support, and in some instances garnered support from unwitting recruits who had accidentally become indebted to the insurgent group.20

The pattern follows in Niger as well, where financial opportunities propel enrollment.21 Just as in Cameroon, where youth enrollment into armed groups identified similar trends of government distrust, marginalization and exclusion, and a lack of jobs, poor living conditions and opportunities for economic mobility ultimately prime reasons behind their decisions to join.22

Similarly, experts working in Far North, Cameroon told Climate Refugees that most Boko Haram recruitment there is based on economic gain. Besides the displaced, 1.6 million people in the Far North are food insecure, and even before the crisis, three of the four million population lived below the poverty line.23 While the Cameroonian government has control over much of the country, the Far North region in the Lake Chad Basin has been largely overlooked by the government, leaving a vacuum that Boko Haram factions have filled. In addition, Cameroon has limited institutional capacity and lacks government experience for handling refugees.

Experts in Chad echoed the same concern, saying the “climate favors Boko Haram’s conflict” by seizing on the inherent insecurity and chaos that environmental displacement creates.

If a goal for Boko Haram was to capture villages in and around the Lake Chad Basin, allowing it a hideout and base of attack in operations, then they achieved that in part because they seized opportunities that climate change and underdevelopment provided.
III. IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE DISPLACEMENT ON SECURITY IN THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

The Lake Chad Basin Commission has warned for years about the insecurity climate change could pose in the region. Since the evolution of Boko Haram, African leaders, including Chadian President Idriss Deby, who said the shrinking lake created a base for Boko Haram, have stated that poverty, chronic underdevelopment and high unemployment allow for ease of recruitment and Boko Haram ideologies to take root.24

“As the lake shrank, Boko Haram could move vehicles and machinery that could attack us.”
Nigerian refugee from Damasak - Sayam Refugee Camp, Diffa, Niger

The UN Security Council heard the call. After first discussing the Lake Chad Basin crisis in July 201625 and then January 201726, in March 2017, the Security Council undertook a mission to visit the Lake Chad Basin in order to highlight a neglected conflict but also to understand the scale of the humanitarian crisis and root causes of the conflict.27 Prior to the trip, there was general consensus among members that underdevelopment in the Lake Chad Basin was at the root of the conflict. This was confirmed during the mission when members were told that climate change impacts and the shrinking of Lake Chad served as one of the drivers of the conflict.28

During the Security Council’s mission, President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger said Boko Haram would not have “taken root” if not for the shrinking of Lake Chad;29 while Nigeria’s Vice President hoped the visit would help shed light on the climate change impacts of a diminished Lake Chad and its impact on livelihoods, longer-term development and IDP needs.30

The subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 2349 in operative clauses 26 and 23, respectively, recognized the “adverse effects of climate change and ecological changes among other factors on the stability of the region, including through water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity,” emphasized the need for risk assessment and risk management strategies vis-à-vis climate change, and called on States to support climate resilience action plans to help build and sustain peace.31

With this one paragraph the Security Council sent a signal that it was willing to consider a non-traditional threat such as climate change in the international peace and security framework. Essentially, with the inclusion of climate change under issues of development and root causes in the Lake Chad Basin conflict, the Security Council demonstrated willingness to engage with the impacts of climate change through a conflict prevention lens and civil society actors should take note.
This marks an opportunity for security, humanitarian, development and environmental sectors to focus their Lake Chad Basin work towards building case studies from the field focused on climate change and human security, thereby providing an evidentiary basis on the role that climate change plays in conflict and security in the region.

Lest we gloss over this important development in conflict security analysis, recall that prior to this Lake Chad Basin resolution, while some members of the Security Council stressed the security implications prevalent in climate change, others were reticent about even discussing the issue of climate change, citing that other UN bodies were more suited to handle the issue.

The Security Council first considered climate change during a Ministerial-level open debate on the relationship between energy, security and climate in April 2007. With divisions as to whether the issue was commensurate with the Security Council’s mandate, there was no outcome. During debate, the UK pointed to the risk that volatile climate could exacerbate common drivers of conflict such as ‘migratory pressures’ and competition for resources, which was echoed by others who drew linkages between climate change displacement and the Security Council’s mandate to prevent conflict.\(^{32}\)

In July 2011, another open debate on climate change was held where similar divisions arose amongst the 15 Security Council members as well as from the 47 non-Council members that participated. However, a Presidential Statement was agreed upon the “possible adverse effects of climate change (that) may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security.” The statement also highlighted the importance of including conflict analysis and contextual information on security implications of climate change in the UN Secretary General’s reports in instances where climate change acts as a possible driver of conflict or threat to international peace and security.\(^{33}\)

The key takeaway here is for civil society actors in peace and security sectors to take note of the importance and interest paid by the Security Council in requesting conflict analysis and contextual information on the possible security implications of climate change. It signals an important trend that the Security Council might be open to considering climate change as a driver of conflict when presented with convincing data and contextual analysis.

The 2011 debate proved to be the last time the Security Council held a formal meeting on climate change, choosing instead to discuss climate change through the lens of non-traditional threats to peace and security. For example, briefings and open debates, where climate change was an included issue, have since been convened on “new challenges to international peace and security and conflict prevention,” “peace and security challenges facing small island developing states” and “water, peace and security”, where the shrinking Lake Chad was cited as a direct source of insecurity by Angola, Sweden and the United States.\(^{34}\)

Since then, the Security Council has addressed climate change through informal Arria-formula meetings. While these informal meetings do not produce an outcome, they do allow space for member states to hear a range of views from various experts and stakeholders. The Security Council
has held three such meetings: “security dimensions of climate change” on 15 February 2013, “the role of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security” on 30 June 2015 and “security implications of climate change: sea level rise” on 10 April 2017. Additionally another meeting on food security, nutrition and peace was held in March 2016, where climate change was highlighted as exacerbating food insecurity and global resource scarcity.

Even with limited outcomes and informal discussions due to political divisions, the frequency of Security Council discussions on the topic have steadily grown and serve a valuable purpose in highlighting the complex nexus between climate change and security. These informal discussions have allowed African states and stakeholders a venue in which to present the security threats and forcible displacement compounded by Lake Chad shrinking, a topic that was raised multiple times in the June 2015 Arria-formula meeting when several African states noted that conflict had risen due to forced migration from the area. They added that climate change impacts had played a role in allowing radicalism and terrorism to take root by exacerbating poverty.

Most experts, as well as those Climate Refugees spoke with, agree that climate change can drive conflict stressors. While migration can improve a country’s economic growth, rapid influxes of populations in weak political and socio-economic systems can strain systems and increase the risk of violence, creating a climate-conflict nexus.

Beyond the Boko Haram crisis, the Lake Chad Basin is rife with conditions to create massive displacement and violence resulting from climate change. Desertification and volatile weather fluctuations such as dry spells, extreme heat and flooding have had dramatic impacts on farmers, pastoralists and the food industry in the Lake Chad Basin. Climate change-induced migration can lead to conflict by fostering competition over natural and socio-economic resources, overwhelm host coping capacities, excite ethnic tensions and manipulate existing fault lines.

**Increased competition over resources**

It is expected that climate-change induced resource scarcity will increase the risk of conflict between
competing groups.\textsuperscript{41} In Nigeria, land shortages are driving Fulani herdsmen south, where a survey found climate factors were primary drivers of forced migration.\textsuperscript{42} Nigerian Lake Chad Basin experts and stakeholders interviewed say there is no doubt that climate change effects, and specifically the shrinking of Lake Chad, has had an impact on conflict in the region. This has lead herdsmen to travel in search of grazing land and water, settling for longer periods of time in foreign lands that strain resources and relations with host communities. Many experts interviewed told Climate Refugees about localized clashes and killings, which they feared could spark a cycle of violence similar to the clan violence in Somalia, which they see as rooted in comparable environmental factors. The situations they described as almost weekly, reflect research that shows the likelihood of conflict increases amongst displaced populations and host communities who have to compete over resources.\textsuperscript{43}

Nigerian NGO TY Danjuma Foundation told Climate Refugees of a spike in internal migration even where Boko Haram is not present. An increasing number of northern Fulani herdsmen, some of whom seasonally live in the Lake Chad Basin, have been on the move south in search of grazing land, setting off conflict over dwindling resources. Although they are nomadic, TY Danjuma feel the increased migration and affected areas reflect a growing environmental trend of

\begin{boxedminipage}{0.9\linewidth}
\textbf{Climate Change Adaptation Programming: A Rights-Based Approach}

Several NGOs in the Lake Chad Basin have introduced adaptation programming to address the impacts of climate change amongst displaced communities. This is a welcome step that should be enhanced with further funding and support to increase resiliency and rebuild livelihoods of displaced communities who may live for generations in exile from their homes.

Working with local government plans, NGOs are promoting the adoption of adaptive agricultural practices by piloting climate-adaptive demonstration farms to show planting, harvesting, weed management and innovative water conservation techniques. NGOs provide resilient seeds shown to be more adaptive to changed climates and are also linking communities to agricultural dealers who can sell farmers’ excess harvests. The resilient seeds come from research institutes, such as the LCRI in Nigeria, and they utilize community external agents for seed multiplication. This is then certified and passed through the Nigerian Agricultural Seed Council so that agents can become licensed seed multipliers at the community level. Farmers are encouraged to grow crops for daily use and future reserve, marking excess for sale and thereby promoting a market-driven agricultural system.

Adaptive strategies include: promoting crop rotation systems, limiting the use of chemicals, mulching systems that prevent water run off, innovative sources of water conservation and collection and the promotion of organic composting to offset the lack of organic material in the soil from overgrazing.

Some NGOs integrate social cohesion training into the agricultural livelihoods programming in order to educate, build and promote peaceful co-existence between displaced and host communities.

Disaster risk reduction is also being integrated into climate agricultural adaptation with an early warning system at the communal level based on risk mappings of heavy rains, crop disease and other climate conditions.

Other organizations like the Millennium Challenges Corporation are working with the Nigerien government to help identify best uses of its ground water resources, and working with communities through consultations to implement climate resilient agricultural programming.

With the vast amount of communities and displaced persons agriculturally dependent, such essential programming should be scaled up to build resilience. It should also ensure a rights-based approach is pursued that guarantees:

1. Equal access and non-discrimination in the selection of participants in climate adaptive programs.
2. Access to information and full participation of affected communities, especially marginalized groups, in planning, designing and decision-making regarding climate adaptation programming.
3. Economic, social and cultural rights of the affected communities should form the basis of the climate adaptive measures and should be promoted towards realizing and safeguarding those rights.
\end{boxedminipage}
Lake Chad tributaries drying up. In Beniu, Nasarawa, Taraba, Kaduna and Plateau states, ethnic clashes with Fulani herdsmen have ensued. In three of these states, they said the Nigerian military intervened.

Another Nigerian NGO, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, echoed these findings, adding that nomadic herdsmen have always migrated without incident, but the increased frequency has resulted in regular communal clashes, attacks and further displacement.

Displaced farmers have lost their indigenous seed sources, which one expert described as “good as losing your livelihood.” Many NGOs are mitigating competition over resources and rebuilding livelihoods by introducing climate adaptive seeds, trainings and techniques that improve the lives of displaced communities while also teaching climate adaptive techniques they can continue, should they ever return home.

**Overwhelming Host Capacities**

Over 80% of displaced persons seek refuge amongst host communities and receive no government assistance, relying solely on international aid. Many spoke with frustration of the continued marginalization by the government, saying their unmet needs were straining relations with host communities who viewed them with suspicion and distrust. Lacking a source of livelihood remained one of the chief challenges, and attempts to generate income by selling firewood were often met with conflict by host communities who accused IDPs of stealing their economic opportunities.

In Niger, a number of Nigerian refugees said they live outside formal camps amongst host communities because they lack livelihood resources and services in the camps. In Cameroon, some unregistered refugees and most IDPs live in host communities instead of camps, straining already limited resources. Together with a funding shortfall, most IDPs lack food, shelter and fees for school, continuing the cycle of poverty, lack of education and gender exploitation as some girls turn to prostitution.

With increased populations in Nigerian cities like Maiduguri, which has twenty times more inhabitants than in the 1960’s, increased demand for housing and resources such as water and arable land are creating local conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. A World Bank study of the Lake Chad Basin found influxes of displaced communities have strained host resources and capacities such as water supply, education and health services in already vulnerable communities struggling with preexisting development deficits, resulting in increased tensions between displaced and host communities.

Reflecting on its experience in the Lake Chad Basin, Oxfam International said the crisis “highlights why focusing only on displaced people who have crossed borders overlooks a large group of displaced people who have similar protection and assistance needs to refugees.” Experts interviewed said millions affected in host and displaced communities remain in need of assistance, compounded by an exhaustion of resources, deepening poverty, malnutrition, disease and risks of exploitation are on the rise.

“They chase us when we try to sell firewood. We have never had any support from the government. What we really want back is our livelihoods. We are just surviving. We feel like life is not worth living.”

*IDP from Mafa - Muna Dalti Camp, Diffa, Niger*
The nexus between climate change, displacement and security is not so nebulous, for “even if climate-induced environmental stresses do not lead to conflict, they are likely to contribute to migrations that exacerbate social and political tensions, some of which could overwhelm host governments and populations.”

Looking comparatively at the Syria war, the Center for Climate and Security found that up until the start of the civil war in Dara’a in 2011, many security analysts had posited that Syria was immune to the perils of the Arab Spring, which up to that point had toppled several Middle Eastern governments. However, their analysis found that during the 2006-2011 drought, massive internal displacement from rural to urban areas of Syrian farmers who had lost their entire sources of livelihood, and government mismanagement of water resources, had gone largely unreported. Overlooked was also the impact such migration had on urban areas already strained under the burden of huge refugee populations from Iraq and Palestine. None of this factored into security analysis with regard to its impacts on Syria’s stability.

A subsequent 2015 study found that climate change played a significant role in contributing to the drought that preceded the Syrian conflict and contributed to widespread crop failure and mass displacement of farmers from urban to rural areas.

It is important to emphasize that neither Climate Refugees nor the researchers cited in this report contend the Syria war was directly caused by drought-related displacement, however it is an element that contributed to the complex pattern of stressors that led to the political upheaval in that country.

The US National Intelligence Council’s “Global Water Security” report, commissioned to assess the impact global water issues could have on national security, found overpopulation, underdevelopment and climate change would lead to water shortages in many nations, which when combined with environmental degradation, poverty, social tensions, weak political institutions and leadership, would result in social disruptions that could lead to state failure.

These serve as examples that climate change and climate change-induced displacement are factors that can exacerbate conflict, suggesting that climate change should be better integrated into international security response.

**Ethnic Tensions**

We know that competition for increasingly scarce resources force people to move while increasing the likelihood of human conflict. Ongoing ethnic tensions in Nigeria between the Muslim Fulani and Christian Yoruba are exacerbated by climate change-induced displacement of Fulani on Yoruba lands. Between 2012 and 2014, clashes between nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers in central Nigeria killed an estimated 1,200 people and cost the Nigerian economy more than $14 billion in losses.
Tensions continue in Niger as well where deadly violence between Fulani and Buduma tribes who had fled the Lake Chad region erupted over access to a well. The two ethnicities are said to have once lived peaceably but as resources grow scarce, conflict has risen between displaced and nomadic communities. The peacebuilding NGO Search for Common Ground say both Boko Haram and ethnic conflicts are growing and are increasingly linked.\textsuperscript{57}

Boko Haram not only fills the security vacuum left vacant by the government, but are also willing to settle down and develop “an expertise in manipulating local intra and intercommunal tensions.” This is evident in the Lake Chad Basin where a Boko Haram faction has forged partnerships with the Buduma, an ethnic group indigenous to the area, to chase out Hausa migrants who had taken over most of the profitable fishing trade.\textsuperscript{58} The alliance has allowed Boko Haram to seek refuge in the Lake Chad islands where regional armies are not present.

**Existing fault lines**

The Lake Chad Basin is a long neglected rural region that governments have overlooked in favor of the political center.\textsuperscript{59} As a result, fishermen and subsistence farming residents have often felt marginalized by their governments, manifesting in underdevelopment, further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. It is no coincidence then that Boko Haram has established itself in the Lake Chad Basin, capitalizing on the neglected region as a base from which to attack, recruit and expand control.

As part of its counterinsurgency strategy, Nigeria and its allies have for the most part pushed Boko Haram out of the major cities and towns it once occupied. However that long, lingering history of neglect in rural lands with little to no government administration, severe underdevelopment and poverty was the perfect refuge from which to set up base and seek support and recruitment. The International Crisis Group writes:

> “Unlike the region’s governments, which are not well disposed toward nomadic communities and struggle to integrate them, radical groups are often ready to consolidate their networks and acquire intelligence by recruiting local people. Boko Haram, for instance, takes the time to approach communities in the Lake Chad Basin. The group can visit repeatedly, asking those willing to collaborate for an often symbolic donation and enlisting a few local young men.

> The jihadists are most successful at establishing themselves among rural communities that were only recently integrated into countries, have a weak attachment to the state and are poorly represented in parliament or local government. These include nomadic groups and communities living in border areas with supposedly doubtful loyalties, such as...those in the Lake Chad marshes.”\textsuperscript{60}

Boko Haram has manipulated existing fault lines to engender support for its cause in the Lake Chad Basin. For example, Boko Haram capitalizes on the long-held frustration of the Fulani who feel marginalized by the Nigerian government.\textsuperscript{61} Thus, any strategy dealing with Boko Haram must address the local roots of discontent.
NEED FOR PROTECTION

The upcoming two Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees are a welcome step in the right direction to strengthen the human rights and protection of displaced and migrant communities. To stop forced displacements, ensure protection for displaced communities and promote economic self-reliance, instruments in human rights, humanitarian and development warrant review.

On Relocation
African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa [“Kampala Convention”]¹, Article 1, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement²: Principle 7; 2 :
- States bear responsibility to safeguard and protect the rights of all displaced, including those relocated by government evacuation.

On Development and the Right to Work
African Charter on Human and People’s Rights³, Article 24, Refugee Convention⁴, Articles 17-19, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 9:
- States are under obligation to promote the livelihoods of all displaced, notably agricultural-dependent and indigenous communities.

On State Responsibility
Kampala Convention, Article 3 (2), (d), Article 5 (1), Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 3; 1:
- Displaced communities receive no assistance from their governments, and instead rely solely on aid agencies.
 Lake Chad Basin states must scale up funding and support to affected communities, in coordination with local and international aid agencies.

On Climate Change
Kampala Convention, Article 5, (4), African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Resolution 153⁵:
- Enhance a human rights-based approach to all climate adaptation measures undertaken in displaced communities and Lake Chad Basin.

Right to Education
Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principle 23, Refugee Convention, Article 22:
- IDPs solely reliant on international aid cannot afford the school fees to access education. Governments should offset education costs to ensure that displacement does not pose a barrier to a right to education.
- Gender programming should take into account that “women and girls experience the nexus between climate change and peace and security in direct and profound ways,”⁶ notably an increased risk of sexual and gender based violence and violation of their human rights. Women participants in this report faced increased challenges in accessing resources due to climate change. Furthermore, they expressed an interest in income-generating activities that would promote their independence and self-sufficiency.

New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants⁷, Introduction (1), Commitment 43, 50:
- Recognized that people move to avoid the adverse effects of climate change, both slow onset and natural disasters.
- Committed to address the drivers that create or exacerbate large-scale movements.
- Committed to analyzing the reasons behind large-scale movements.
- Committed to combat environmental degradation and the adverse impacts of climate change.
- Committed to assist migrants in need experiencing conflicts or natural disasters.
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**To the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria**

- Implement UNSC resolution 2349 through the respective development programs as well as the National Adaption Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria, Niger’s National Strategy and Action Plan for Climate Changes and Variability and 3N Initiative: Nigeriens Nourish Nigeriens, Cameroon’s National Adaptation Plan and Chad National Adaptation Plan.

- Shift national strategies, thereby international responses as well, from a humanitarian-focused response to early recovery and long-term development that addresses resiliency while contributing to sustainable peace.

- Uphold and adhere to the principles of protection, including a right to education, enshrined in the international and regional instruments (‘Kampala Convention’ and Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement).

- Provide local integration of displaced communities in line with international and regional instruments.

- Focusing on displaced community needs, wherever possible, steer new displaced to areas best served to meet their needs. Through identification of suitable areas and local and international aid, farmers, pastoralist and trader community needs can be better met with land, resources and tools provided towards rebuilding livelihoods, contributing to enhanced economic growth and stability.

**To the Governments of the Lake Chad Basin Countries and the United Nations**

- Politically adapt to view climate change as an issue that threatens peace and security. This will be necessary to avoiding and de-escalating the conflict climate change fuels. A military only response will be inadequate to address the root causes and ultimately provide a long-term solution to the crisis.

**To the United Nations**

- With growing evidence of a link between climate change and conflict, the United Nations Secretary General should consider the appointment of a Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG) on Climate and Security with a specific and limited mandate to examine the threat climate change poses to international peace and security. This would ensure that the envoy’s role does not encroach upon the mandate of the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a critique that some UN member states may level. In fact, the work of the SRSG could indirectly support the adaptation work of the UNFCCC in situations where conflict and threats of conflict pose barriers to climate adaptation. The appointment, first proposed by the bloc of Pacific Small Island Developing States, would create a venue for a holistic examination of climate change threats as it pertains to conflict and security and reflect the emerging threats of a rapidly changing environment in international peace and security. As noted by Security Council members, the UN system needs additional information on how climate policies impact peace and security consequences and to ensure that peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts reflect climate change realities.
• The UN General Assembly should request a follow up to the 2009 UN Secretary General report “Climate Change and its Possible Security Implications” specific to areas where climate displacement vulnerability and the threat of conflict is acute. The Security Council signaled a willingness to engage on the topic of climate change with respect to conflict prevention in its Resolution 2349, its request for the Secretary General to provide reports on the crisis in Lake Chad, and its previous Presidential Statement, which should be leveraged by the General Assembly to highlight potential areas of conflict not on the Security Council’s agenda.

• Following its record of meetings addressing climate change thus far, the UN Security Council should consider exercising its rights under Chapter VI, Article 34 of the UN Charter to investigate whether climate change could give rise to a dispute or situation likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It can do this either as a continued matter of thematic debate or equally through the lens of specific country situations such as Myanmar, where the potential risk of a conflict-climate nexus is high.

To Regional Actors

• Germany, Norway, the UN and the four Lake Chad Basin countries’ initiative to create a Consultative Group on Prevention and Stabilization that looks at the root causes of the crisis is welcome. The interrelated nature of underdevelopment and climate change should be examined as contributing root causes in order to establish a sustainable solution to the conflict.

• Identify and collect research to develop best practices on climate adaptation measures that mitigate climate displacement.

• The upcoming October meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and African Union’s first regional conference on stabilization of Boko Haram affected areas should explore entry points, including possible discussions with Boko Haram, to stabilize the conflict so as to introduce climate adaptation efforts in affected areas.

• While its environmental feasibility is outside the expertise and scope of this report, the Lake Chad Development and Climate Resilience Action Plan and the envisaged Transaqua water transfer from the Congo Basin to the Lake Chad as a climate adaptation measure should not violate the human rights of local communities, and if undertaken, should ensure accountability processes to safeguard and protect the rights of affected people and communities and address unintended environmental, livelihoods and social impacts, which may risk creating tensions and conflicts.

Humanitarian and Development Actors, including UN Agencies and Civil Society

• Scale up food security to ward off famine and build the resiliency of both beneficiaries and host communities.

• Prioritize displaced communities, in both formal and informal camps, as well as host communities’ humanitarian and development needs, including in early recovery and long-term development phases.
• Make assistance more adaptive by creating linkages between humanitarian and development actors who can work together to develop more flexible projects that assist communities most threatened by climate change.

• Ensure climate adaptation is fully integrated into livelihood and early recovery programming.

• Ensure a comprehensive response from the humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and security sectors that address the underlying drivers and root causes of the Lake Chad Basin conflict and also those working on the climate-conflict nexus.

• Humanitarian and development actors should invest in research and advocacy, producing case studies that provide contextual analysis on the climate-conflict nexus.

• Scale up education activities for all displaced communities, paying particular attention to the full inclusion of women and girls’ access to education.

• Ensure gender programming takes into account the unique ways in which women are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change; create income-generating activities that promote their self-sufficiency and ensure their full participation in program planning and design.

To Donors

• Urgently increase financial support that could save thousands of lives. As of the end of June, the 2017 combined regional humanitarian appeal of $1.5 billion is only 30.9% funded, with $465 million received.

• Ensure funding to early recovery livelihood and income-generating programming, which builds resilience and establishes a process of recovery.

• Increase funding for protection programming including provision of psychosocial services.

• Allocate increased funding to education programming, which remains grossly underfunded as a cluster throughout the four Lake Chad Basin countries.

• Within displaced communities, invest in strengthening peacebuilding initiatives by local civil society such as social cohesion, community engagement, dialogue and create development-security linkages to prevent and counter violent extremism and as well, climate adaptation because of its connection to security.
ENDNOTES


18. Ibid, pg 15


52. Kelley et al. University of Southern California, Santa Barbara; School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University, “Climate


68. Ibid

Endnotes - Need for Protection Text Box

ABOUT CLIMATE REFUGEES

Founded in 2015, Climate Refugees is a non-profit, non-governmental research and advocacy project created to bring attention and action to help people displaced as a result of climate change. Our field reports that identify climate change as a driver of displacement provide a human lens on climate change, documenting human rights conditions side-by-side with political, social, economic, and conflict risk analysis.

Climate Refugees defends the rights of human beings displaced across borders as a result of climate change. We document cases to shed light on the legal void of cross-border climate displacement and advocate for the creation of legal norms and policies that protect those impacted by climate change-induced displacement.

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