

PEACE AND SECURITY

CLIMATE SECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Perspectives on Addressing Climate-Related
Security Risks from the Horn of Africa

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Climate-related security risks are transforming the security landscape in the Horn of Africa. The Working Group was established to develop suggestions to better address climate-related security risks in the region.



Peace processes need to be climate sensitive, based on a sound foundation of locally owned knowledge. Local communities need to be involved in and benefit from national and regional peace processes.



International actions to address climate-related security risks need to be coordinated with the relevant regional processes of the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and civil society.

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SUMMARY

There is an increasing consensus that the human security risks of today will be the hard security risks of tomorrow. However, there are no hard security solutions to the encroaching impacts of climate change. Instead, climate-related security risks are transforming the security landscape in general and in the wider region of the Horn of Africa in particular. In an initiative to identify locally anchored ideas and criteria to successfully address climate-related security risks, the Horn of Africa Climate Security Working Group was established by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kenya Office, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in 2018. The Group brings together senior climate and environmental experts and civil society representatives from different countries of the Horn of Africa region, all in their personal capacity. The objective of the Group was to develop criteria and suggestions for mechanisms to incorporate climate-related security risks into regional, continental and international efforts to prevent and regulate violent conflicts in the Horn of Africa.

Without wanting to »securitise« the issue of climate change, the Working Group believes that the impact of climate change on already tense, often cross-boundary and sometimes regional systems of violent conflict in the Horn of Africa requires urgent and sensitive action with the involvement of a variety of stakeholders to strengthen collective security in the region. The following criteria represent Working Group members' consensus and do not claim to be comprehensive or sufficient for resolving climate-related security risks in the Horn of Africa. However, the Group maintains that inclusive development, conflict prevention and conflict mitigation can become more effective when future policy interventions are based on these criteria.

The Working Group agrees that there is no deterministic relationship between violent conflict and climate change. However, it finds that indirect impacts of climate change on livelihoods increase the risk of conflict and, more specifically, violent conflict. Climate-related security risks are complex and interconnected, and are challenging the development of effective responses at all levels.

- **Criterion 1:** Peace processes and agreements need to be more climate sensitive. Increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change is a necessary part of any peace process to avoid the risk of an otherwise sound peace settlement being destabilised by inattention to the aspect of climate change.
- **Criterion 2:** Local communities affected by the double burden of climate change and conflict need to be involved in and benefit from national and regional peace processes. Representatives of local communities need to have better access to peace processes to address and mitigate climate-related security risks. Sufficient resources, time and space are necessary for locally based community dialogue mechanisms addressing climate-related security risks.
- **Criterion 3:** Effectively addressing climate-related security risks in the Horn of Africa region depends on developing a sound foundation of regionally and locally owned knowledge and data analysis, which must be connected to the needs of a particular region or situation.
- **Criterion 4:** International actions to address climate-related security risks can only work if they are coordinated with the relevant regional processes and mechanisms of the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and civil society. Mechanisms that strengthen dialogue between the AU, IGAD, civil society and experts on climate security need to be enhanced and internationally supported.

INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa region—here understood as the IGAD region¹—faces socioeconomic and political challenges, which include endemic poverty, weak governance structures, protracted conflicts, demographic pressures and rapid urbanization. Violent conflicts are embedded in regional conflict systems, transcending the borders of individual states. Climate change is an additional stress factor in an already vulnerable region with strong implications for peace and security.

Climate-related changes compound the prevailing social, economic and political challenges, especially in regions such as the Horn of Africa, where agriculture and pastoralism are an important source of livelihood.² With the deprivation of livelihoods, climate impacts increase security risks and the likelihood of violent conflict. The risks that arise include heightened political tensions within and between countries of the region as well as violent conflict—which can lead to forced displacement. Furthermore, climate-related security risks increase the challenges for conflict prevention and resolution in the Horn of Africa region.

Responding to climate-related security risks requires an integrated approach that combines knowledge on climate risks with the social and political realities of the region. To improve responses, it is therefore important to interrogate how conflicts and conflict-related migration in the Horn of Africa are affected by climate change and to identify and develop adequate measures for conflict prevention and resolution that are regionally owned, while still ensuring that violent actors are held to account. It is important to not leave this process of interrogation and identification to governments and experts alone, but to actively involve civil society representatives from the region and those most affected by climate change at the community level.

¹ The IGAD members are: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

² Barnett, Jon and Adger, W. Neil (2007): Climate Change, Human Security and Violent Conflict, in: *Political Geography* 26, no. 6: 639-55. van Baalen, Sebastian and Mobjörk, Malin (2017): Climate Change and Violent Conflict in East Africa: Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Research to Probe the Mechanisms, in: *International Studies Review*, 10 November 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/vix043>.

Consequently, climate-related security risks are now prominently discussed at different levels in the region. The topic has garnered the attention of the UN Security Council where climate change was recognised to undermine peace. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 828th meeting, on 19th February 2019, to an open session on Climate Change, Peace and Security and is continuously developing its climate security frameworks.³ Climate change and security was also discussed at a side event at the High-Level Political Forum of the United Nations in July 2019 and with a specific focus on Somalia in February 2020.⁴

Against this background, the Horn of Africa Climate Security Working Group was initiated by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kenya Office, The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA). Between 2018 and 2020, the three organisations convened four Working Group meetings bringing together representatives from civil society and experts from the Horn of Africa region to analyse the complexity of violent conflict in the region and its relationship with climate change and to identify locally anchored ideas to develop better responses to climate-related security risks in the Horn of Africa. The objective was to jointly analyse the regional dimension of climate-related security risks, suggest mechanisms to address these and develop criteria to make ongoing conflict prevention efforts and peace processes climate-sensitive. The criteria presented in this report thus represent an agreement among the members of the Group. Their implementation is highly context-sensitive: Some criteria might be more relevant in the short term, others in the long term. Furthermore, the four criteria only represent minimal consensus amongst the Working Group, whose members understand that in light of the region's changing dynamics these criteria can only serve as foundation for context-sensitive actions to reduce climate-related security risks.

CLIMATE-RELATED SECURITY RISKS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The Horn of Africa region is a vast arid and semi-arid region of 4.5 million km², with a relatively fast-growing population projected to reach almost 440 million by 2050 from its current

population of a little over 250 million.⁵ Of the eight IGAD member states, four are in the bottom 10 per cent of countries in the Human Development Index global ranking, one is in the bottom 15 per cent and one in the bottom 25 per cent. According to the UNDP Human Development Index report of 2019, three of the five most fragile states in the world—Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan—are in the region.⁶ The Horn of Africa region, which in this case includes all the IGAD member states, is at the epicentre of the climate crisis. In the last decade alone, the region has experienced a rise in temperatures, erratic rainfall and rising sea levels, further exposing it to the effects of climate change. According to a 2018 World Bank report, the region's average temperatures will increase by up to 1.5°C in the next 20 years and up to 4.3°C by the 2080s.⁷ The region's economy is reliant on natural resources and suffers from serious water shortages, food scarcity, increased risk to livelihood systems, as well as being vulnerable to a number of climate-induced disasters and diseases.

The indirect impacts of climate change on people's livelihoods increase the risk of conflict and, more specifically, violent conflict. Climate-related security risks are complex and interconnected and are frustrating the development of effective responses at all levels. For example, transboundary water resource disputes can disrupt local livelihoods and access to natural resources, while market instability and extreme weather events can have a negative impact on global supply chains, with profound local repercussions.

In the case of communities dependent on natural resource-based economies such as agriculture and pastoralism, the impact of climate change makes people vulnerable to being pushed into alternative livelihoods. In such cases, communities may themselves turn to crime or be pressured by criminal actors to engage in drug and human trafficking, as well as smuggling as a means to supplement their income. There is a whole array of multifaceted unintended climate-induced consequences, such as increased insecurity of land tenure, marginalisation of minority groups, increased environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity.

Over the past century and, most significantly, over the last 30 years, droughts have become more frequent and more severe in the Horn of Africa, devastating the lives of millions. The existing conflicts in the Horn are happening against a background of national and local conflicts that are heavily embedded in regional conflict systems. The African Union and regional organisations, such as IGAD, are

3 AU, The 828th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council, an open session on the theme: »Climate change funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to contribute towards peace and security«, 27 February 2019, <<https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-828th-meeting-of-the-au-peace-and-security-council-an-open-session-on-the-theme-climate-change-funding-in-line-with-the-africa-adaptation-initiative-aa-i-to-contribute-towards-peace-and-security>>.

4 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) (2019): Agenda 2030 at a crossroad – How do we ensure an integrated approach in tackling climate-related security risks, conflict and inequality?, 16 July 2019, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=20000&nr=6123&menu=2993>>, and UN News (2020): Somalia: Further consensus-building needed ahead of historic election, 24 February 2020, <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1058251>>.

5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (2018): *Climate Change Profile: Greater Horn of Africa*, April 2018, Available at: <<https://www.government.nl/binaries/government/documents/publications/2019/02/05/climate-change-profiles/Greater+Horn+of+Africa.pdf>>.

6 United Nations Development Programme (2019): *2019 Human Development Index Ranking*, <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/2019-human-development-index-ranking>>.

7 The World Bank (2018): *Horn of Africa – Groundwater Initiative – Project Information Document/Identification/Concept Stage (PID)*, 18 October 2018, <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/259271539954342284/pdf/Project-Information-Document-PID-Horn-of-Africa-Groundwater-Initiative-P169078.pdf>>.

involved in conflict resolution efforts on multiple levels. However, a more transactional and bilateral approach to addressing violent conflict in the region often overshadows collective and regional conflict prevention and regulation efforts. In addition, the security systems in the region are influenced by domestic struggles for political control. Calls for a regional vision are paralleled by ongoing nation and state formation processes, particularly in those countries in the region that are currently undergoing political transition and where social contracts are thus being (re-)negotiated.

Especially with regard to climate security, the AU's recent more normative and increasingly strategic approach showcases what the continental body is capable of in terms of innovative policymaking. Despite a continued lack of financial resources to prevent and resolve conflict more effectively, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have developed an array of elaborate instruments for conflict prevention and management. However, these efforts could be further strengthened in terms of civil society involvement as well as coordination.

CRITERIA FOR ADDRESSING CLIMATE SECURITY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Building on their assessment of the climate security context in the region, the members of the Horn of Africa Climate Security Working Group aimed to analyse the regional dimension of climate-related security risks, propose mechanisms to address these and develop criteria to »climatise« ongoing conflict prevention efforts and peace processes. Through periodic meetings between 2018 and 2020 as well as specific research papers, the Working Group developed the criteria below for addressing climate security in the region.

Criterion 1: *Peace processes and agreements need to be more climate sensitive. Increased resilience to the impacts of climate change is an essential part of any peace process to avoid the risk of an otherwise sound peace settlement being destabilised by inattention to the aspect of climate change.*

- Climate-related security risks need to be integrated into and addressed by conflict prevention initiatives and peace processes in the Horn of Africa. At the community, national and regional level, this requires enhanced participation of non-state actors in peace processes and the establishment of local and national dialogue mechanisms with sufficient resources and time. Furthermore, local community ownership of peace processes needs to be strengthened, as does investment in conflict prevention initiatives that incorporate climate-sensitive language.
- To reduce climate-related security risks, there is also a need to explicitly address those risks during peace processes, when dealing with root causes of violent conflicts and establishing dialogue mechanisms at different levels. As the reduction of such risks will often result in a fairer sharing of resources, the root causes of violent conflicts can be more effectively addressed.

- There is a need to distinguish between and build on short-term interventions which stop violence and long-term efforts which address conflict risks, including climate-related security risks.
- Based on this improved understanding, climate action can be integrated into the implementation of peace agreements by identifying synergies between general peacebuilding and conflict prevention measures on the one hand, and climate adaptation i.e. through the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contributions), the implementation of SDG 13 of the Agenda 2030, capturing elements of addressing climate-related security risks, on the other. The necessary resources need to be made available. Ideally, clear incentives for the international community will be developed and integrated into general funding streams.

Specifically, this could mean:

- Developing a *list of criteria for the international community to climate proof their support* for peace implementation. This could be done with a country-based advisory group comprising key stakeholders who will participate in the peace process and guarantee that the potential challenges posed by climate change to the success of the peace process are identified and outlined at an early stage.
- Identifying a *climate legate* who is—while outside the peace negotiations—participating with the sole mandate to advocate for the issue being part of the process.

Criterion 2: *Communities affected by the double burden of climate change and conflict need to be involved in and benefit from national and regional peace processes. Representatives of local communities need to have better access to peace processes to address and mitigate climate-related security risks. Sufficient resources, time and space are necessary for locally based community dialogue mechanisms addressing climate-related security risks.*

- Provide support for innovative and participatory mechanisms to address climate-related security risks among the local communities affected by violent conflict. Trust building and reconciliation efforts among local communities need to incorporate climate-related security risks, especially when it comes to the management of increasingly scarce resources to climate proof peace and prevent renewed outbreak of violence. Such processes take time and will require resources, which need to be made available at the local level. In addition, there is a need to focus more on the direct involvement of civil society actors in peace processes at different levels, between regional, national and community levels, sometimes transcending borders.
- Local, national and regional civil society actors can support early warning and prevention efforts before

violent conflict breaks out. Their involvement is especially crucial in a peacebuilding context.

- To enhance a holistic climate change response, different ongoing international efforts should be linked to reduce climate-related security risks. This includes mitigation efforts, adaptation to more frequent extreme weather events, which increase the risks of violent conflict, and mechanisms to address climate-related security risks. This also involves enhancing the knowledge and understanding of comprehensive risk management approaches and the long-term impacts of climate change as well as the consideration of communities' climate change and conflict priorities when providing the means of implementation (finance, technology and capacity-building).

Specifically, this could mean:

- Integrating a *special communication component* into peace processes with the explicit aim of creating a bridge with local communities and translating the peace-building initiative for their needs, demonstrating an understanding of climate change as a shared and unifying concern.
- *Facilitating mapping of context-related, existing early warning systems* and prevention activities, which are available to tap into when implementing peace-building activities within a climate-sensitive area.
- Integrating resilience-building into interventions addressing climate-related security risks, as this will contribute to the efforts of countries to tackle extreme weather events.

Criterion 3: *Effectively addressing climate-related security risks in the Horn of Africa region depends on developing a sound foundation of regionally and locally owned knowledge and data analysis.*

- There is a need for further improved local data collection, data quality and joint action-oriented analysis among civil society actors, experts and government agencies to inform climate-related security risk assessments and early warning systems at the national, regional (IGAD) and AU level. This will, in turn, facilitate a coordinated approach in response to the climatisation of conflict prevention measures.
- Locally anchored action-oriented research is needed that seeks to contextually explore the linkages between the effects of climate change and violent conflict so as to create a shared understanding of climate-related security risks and how they can be addressed.
- Enhanced local knowledge will be crucial for developing a basket of indicators specifically targeting the link between climate change and conflict. These indicators could then be embedded into the African Union Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and by extension into IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response

Mechanism (CEWARN), to assist the analysts in climatising their early warning reports and making these reports more relevant to stakeholders.

Specifically, this could mean:

- *Initiating a locally anchored independent expert group on data generation* and provision to act in an advisory function during the implementation of a peace agreement with the mandate to mainstream the environmental situation and its projected developments.
- Considering the potential of citizen science, the relevant methodology could be employed in data collection to more inclusively engage local actors in hotspots of climate fragility risk, build local capacity and expand livelihood options.

Criterion 4: *International actions to address climate-related security risks can only work if they are coordinated with the relevant regional processes and mechanisms of the African Union and IGAD. Mechanisms that strengthen dialogue between the AU, IGAD, local civil society and experts on climate security need to be enhanced and internationally supported.*

- Early warning systems with a focus on climate-related security risks need to be supported and enhanced, both at the AU and IGAD level. International efforts to reduce climate-related security risks need to be more closely coordinated with the AU. The AU is increasingly recognising the aspect of climate risk in its work. The AU Commission has since created a climate cluster; an interdepartmental mechanism co-convened by the Peace and Security Department and the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA), bringing together other relevant AU departments and specialised mechanisms with the aim of creating an AU-wide understanding and response to climate-related risks. Efforts are being made and measures taken to implement the November 2019 Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities. In collaboration with the UN and RECs, the AU seeks to enhance coordination on climate security and its impact on the continent.
- Additional support will be needed to support the AU in bridging the gap between early warning and early response. To do so, climate security responses need to be scaled through engaging IGAD as the regionally anchored first responder.
- Similarly, the AU seeks to scale up its coordination with civil society actors. There is need for stronger involvement of civil society in all AU-led peace processes and conflict prevention efforts. Civil society participation must move beyond mere consultation to involve deliberations between civil society representatives at the regional, national and local level.

Specifically, this could mean:

- *Increasing local and regional cooperation, and knowledge exchange with the UN* through existing mechanisms such as the UN-AU Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership on Peace and Security, which can help generate synergies in operationalising locally informed institutional responses to climate-related security risks.
- *Conducting regular consultative meetings* with civil society and regional bodies to exchange knowledge and inform the outcomes of the UN-AU desk-to-desk cooperation on peacebuilding, conflict prevention and management.
- Linking international initiatives in the region to *leverage on the work of the UN Climate Security Mechanism (CSM)* for enhanced knowledge sharing, which can provide entry points for successful international cooperation.⁸ This can include regular consultations between the UN Climate Security Mechanism and the AU climate cluster.
- Exploring synergies and opportunities for policy learning from existing international cooperation mechanisms such as the AU-EU. Indeed, the 2018 AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance underscores the need to jointly strengthen institutional capacities on climate-related security risks.⁹

⁸ The CSM is a centrally placed joint mechanism of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the UN Development Programme and the UN Environment Programme

⁹ African Union, European Union (2007): *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, 9 December 2007, <<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/africa-eu-strategic-partnership>>; EU, ›Memorandum of understanding between AU and EU on peace, security and governance‹, 23 May 2018, p. 5.

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About the Horn of Africa Climate Security Working Group

The Horn of Africa Climate Security Working Group was established by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Kenya Office, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in 2018, bringing together between 15 to 20 senior climate and environmental experts and civil-society representatives from different countries of the Horn of Africa region for each of the meetings, all in their personal capacity. Between 2018 and 2020, the three organizations convened four Working Group meetings to analyse the complexity of violent conflict in the region and its relationship with climate change. The objective was to develop criteria and suggestions for mechanisms to incorporate climate-related security risks into regional, continental and international efforts to prevent and regulate violent conflicts in the Horn of Africa. All the experts provided input into these criteria to climatize ongoing efforts of conflict prevention and peace processes in the region.

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Further information on the topic can be found here:

<https://www.fes.de/referat-afrika>

