

## CLIMATE CHANGE AS A FACTOR OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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### Relevance

In the 21st century, climate change has become one of the key factors of international security, affecting the scarcity of natural resources, the growth of climate migration, and the increase of socio-economic instability in various regions of the world. These processes have a complex impact on political, economic, and social spheres, contributing to instability and increasing the potential for conflict both within states and at the international level. In conditions of global interdependence, the consequences of climate crises acquire a transboundary character, which makes the analysis of climate change particularly significant for contemporary theory and practice of international relations.

### Keywords

climate change, international security, climate migration, resource scarcity, conflicts.

### Introduction

Climate change has long gone beyond the scope of environmental issues and has become one of the central factors influencing international security. While a decade ago security in international relations was viewed primarily through the lens of military threats, today the attention of the global community is increasingly shifting toward complex, multi-dimensional threats, among which climate occupies a special place. Climate change undermines state stability, provokes migration, intensifies competition for resources, and creates conditions for conflicts, affecting peace and stability in many regions of the world.

### Definition and Nature of the Climate Threat

Climate change refers to long-term alterations in the Earth's climate system caused by natural processes and anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, leading to global temperature rise, sea-level increase, and more frequent extreme weather events. Within the framework of international relations, climate is associated with threats capable of undermining state resilience and human security, for example through the deterioration of food and water security or the destruction of infrastructure.

The United Nations considers climate change to affect human security in several key ways: it intensifies competition for resources, increases the risk of food shortages, provokes migration, and creates additional socio-economic tensions. These processes can destabilize political structures and create conditions for conflicts both within and between states.<sup>1</sup>

### Climate as a Factor of Conflict and Instability

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/human-security>

Climate change increases pressure on natural resources such as water and agricultural land, which in turn may trigger competition and conflicts between communities and states. For example, more severe droughts and the reduction of water supplies worsen living conditions, creating preconditions for internal conflicts and migration. This is particularly evident in regions with vulnerable ecosystems and limited adaptive capacity.

The United Nations Security Council recognizes these interconnections, noting that climate and environmental changes may have negative consequences for stability, especially in regions such as West Africa and the Sahel.<sup>2</sup>

### **Climate Migration and Social Tension**

The increase in extreme weather events, sea-level rise, and land degradation forces millions of people to leave their homes, leading to significant migration flows. Climate migration creates pressure on host states, intensifying social tensions and political instability, as well as increasing the burden on economies and infrastructure. These processes may undermine peace and stability, especially in countries already facing socio-economic challenges.<sup>3</sup>

### **Climate Change and the Transformation of the Concept of Security**

In the context of climate change, the traditional understanding of security in international relations is being reconsidered. While security was previously associated mainly with military threats and the protection of territorial integrity, today greater attention is paid to the concept of comprehensive security, which includes environmental, economic, and humanitarian dimensions. Climate change directly threatens human security by undermining access to water, food, and basic living conditions, ultimately affecting the stability of states and regions as a whole.

Researchers note that incorporating climate issues into the security agenda helps mobilize additional resources and international attention; however, it also raises debates about the risk of excessive militarization of climate policy. Nevertheless, recognizing climate change as a security factor emphasizes its systemic nature and the need for a comprehensive analytical approach.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, climate change contributes to the transformation of the very paradigm of international security, expanding its framework and shifting the focus from exclusively interstate conflicts to threats affecting societal resilience and human security. In this context, climate change is not an independent cause of conflict but rather a “threat multiplier” that exacerbates existing socio-political and economic problems.<sup>5</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Today, climate change is not only an environmental issue but also a serious factor of international security. It intensifies competition for resources, contributes to migration, and may undermine political stability both within states and at the regional level. In response, the international community, particularly the United Nations, is taking steps to integrate climate

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/climate-change-raises-conflict-concerns-0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://kutbilim.kg/ru/analytics/inner/klimaticheskaya-migratsiya-osobennosti-riski-i-posledstviya/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://perconcordiam.com/climate-change-security/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2115&context=mjil>

risks into the security agenda and to develop comprehensive strategies aimed at adaptation and conflict prevention.

Therefore, the climate agenda has become an integral part of international security, requiring the attention of policymakers, researchers, and international institutions.

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