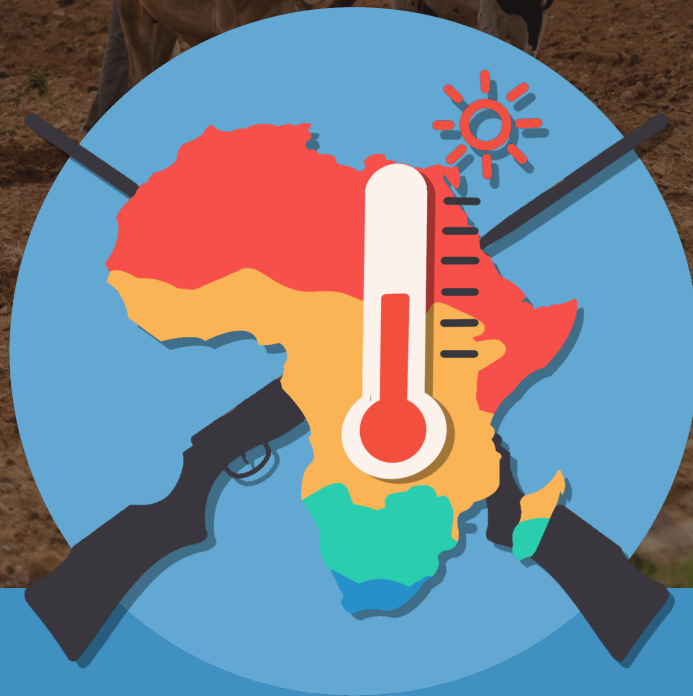




BMUN LXXII



DISARMAMENT & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE (DISEC)



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello delegates!

Welcome to this year's Disarmament and International Security Committee! My name is Chloe Zit-sow and I am so incredibly excited to be your Head Chair this year. I have participated in MUN since seventh grade, meaning this is my eighth year for anyone counting, and to me the energy of committee never gets old. Some fun facts about me: I have been skydiving, I love baking, and I am a massive Stephen King fan. In fact, I am about halfway through reading his entire catalog! As a fun little challenge, if you come up to me and ask me what my favorite Stephen King book is, I will know you read this intro letter. I am also a huge caffeine addict, so don't be concerned by the sheer amount of coffee I will likely be consuming over the weekend.

This year, DISEC will be focusing on two issues that considers political science in addition to typical considerations for international relations. Both topics, Vigilante Violence in Global Conflicts and Climate Conflict in Africa, ask delegates to address the ways in which deep-seated divisions and socioeconomic tensions manifest themselves into conflict. Although delegates who have participated in DISEC before may be more familiar with typical conflict-centric topics such as addressing small-arms trade or enforcing nuclear non-proliferation treaties, this year's topics do not address only a singular issue. Topics A and B see private citizens taking on challenges that they feel are falling outside of their control, such as climate change or criminal activity, trying to create the safety and security that they feel they lack, due to the failure of their governments and/or the international community. Solutions and resolutions must focus not only on the conflicts themselves and those harmed, but the rhetoric and government policies that create the tensions from which violence erupts.

I was personally inspired to pursue these two topics following my enrollment in a comparative politics class here at UC Berkeley. My comparative politics class encouraged me to take my past experience both in MUN and in civic engagement (I used to be Senatorial intern) to consider the ways in which the causes of international crises intersect. It is this understanding that I wish to foster in this year's committee, that the reasons for violent events have the capacity to be both seen and unseen. With all that as a preface, I am excited to introduce you to the rest of our dynamic DISEC dias:

Yasmin Ho, one of your Vice Chairs, is a junior at Berkeley studying Data Science. She is half English and half Taiwanese but grew up in South Africa. Within BMUN, she is also the USG of Logistics. Outside of BMUN, she loves to hike, drink coffee, and try new restaurants! She is super excited to meet all of you and can't wait to hear all of your solutions on our two topics!

Michael is a fourth-year student at Berkeley majoring in Applied Mathematics. He's been involved in

MUN since high school and is excited to see how this committee works towards addressing the issues presented by these two topics. Outside of MUN he enjoys practicing his photography, trying local restaurants, and spending time in nature.

Anamaria is a first year at UC Berkeley double-majoring in Legal Studies and Middle Eastern Cultures and Languages! She is passionate about international relations and looks forward to learning more about how to be involved through BMUN. She is the biggest Starbucks fan and loves playing volleyball!

Madeline Lloyd is a freshman at UC Berkeley studying chemistry. She has participated in MUN since her freshman year of high school and is very excited to see what solutions this committee comes up with. In her free time, she enjoys playing tennis and reading.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chloe Zitsow', written in a cursive style.

Chloe Zitsow

Head Chair of DISEC

Email: czitsow@bmun.org



"Autodefensas" By Esther Vargas [CC BY-SA 2.0 DEED], via Flickr.

TOPIC A: VIGILANTE VIOLENCE IN GLOBAL CONFLICTS

DISEC MANDATE

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) was established as the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly in 1945 because it encapsulates the original and largest overarching objective of the UN, to maintain global peace. A frequent collaborator with other UN organs such as the UN Security Council, the UN Disarmament Commission, and the Conference on Disarmament,

DISEC has the capacity to address “any disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the UN Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations,” (“United Nations...”). Although they cannot take direct action, all passed resolutions are forwarded to the General Assembly and to the Security Council, both of which have the capacity to deploy peacekeepers.



The Knotted-Gun or Non-Violence statue outside the UN representing the concept of international peace.

"Non-Violence or The Knotted Gun by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd, UN New York" By user mira66 [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 DEED], via Flickr.

TERMS TO KNOW

Appetitive aggression: An adaptive condition that results in a person taking pleasure in acts of violence against their victims.

Criminal governance: A situation in which criminal organizations govern entire communities or regions in a state-like administration.

Cyclical violence: A situation in which those victimized by violence become victimizers, replacing the threat that once impacted them.

Death-squads: An example of state-recognized vigilantism, where in exchange for a government reward, either protection, prestige, or financial compensation, a group is allowed to act with authority similar to secret police or national security.

Ethnicity: According to political scientist Kanchan Chandra, ethnicity is categorized by descent-based attributes. These “sticky” qualities are difficult to change in the short term and have the capacity to both bring people together in a cohesive community or divide groups and prompt conflict and discrimination.

Religion: A social-classifier that occasionally overlaps with ethnicity in which a group practices specific rituals to keep with a faith that worships a deity(s) or concept.

Political order: A state which exhibits no challenges to its writ.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): A mental health condition stemming from exposure to a traumatic event. Symptoms can include flashbacks, tremors, self-destructive behaviors, outbursts of aggression, etc (“Post-Traumatic Stress...”).

Vigilantism: Broadly used to reference an illegitimate challenge to the established political order of the state with violence. Defined by Professor Regina Bateson, “the extralegal prevention, investigation, or punishment of offenses...”

Vigilante group: According to a definition by Burrow (1976) a vigilante group is one that fulfills the following criteria:

1. Are members of an organized committee;
2. Are established members of the community;
3. Proceed for a finite time and with definite goals;
4. Claim to act as a last resort because of a failure of the established law enforcement system; and
5. Claim to work for the preservation and betterment of the existing system.

WHAT IS VIGILANTISM?

Vigilantism is a term applied to groups that illegitimately challenge the established political order of the state in regards to violence. This is in contrast to groups denoted as taking legitimate action, or those who undertake challenges on the orders of the state itself. A layman’s example of the difference between vigilante violence and state violence would be the

difference between child brutality and legitimate parental discipline (Rosenbaum and Peter). The action of a parent physically disciplining their child is typically regulated by the law, and at a certain point the punishment, if it falls outside those regulations, is considered child abuse or brutality. The actions of a vigilante group are more than just illegal, they

are extralegal. This means that they are motivated by similar goals as the law itself, but do not work within it, going “beyond the law,” (Bateson). It is within the capabilities of most people to commit an individual act of vigilantism or act as a vigilante without being part of a vigilante group. In this committee we will focus on vigilante groups. On the global stage, vigilantism can take one of two forms: state-recognized vigilantism and community-organized vigilantism.

State-recognized vigilantism may not seem to fall under the purview of the definition of vigilantism due to the fact that the state either acknowledges or overlooks the actions and behavior undertaken by those groups. However, there is a difference between state-recognized and state-regulated. It is important to note that the state rarely officially condones the actions. Instead, they support policies or espouse rhetoric that enables or fosters the violence. In some instances, death squads and groups of similar status are given leeway to operate with recognition similar to that of secret police or national security. In exchange for their actions they may receive government protection, prestige, or financial rewards (“Vigilantism”). Other cases have seen the actors being employed by the state itself but working outside the law.

Two prominent examples of state-recognized vigilantism include the police killings of suspected gang members in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and the vigilante killings of suspected drug users in the Philippines. In 2006 in Sao Paulo many police forces, in reaction to the First Capital Command or PCC, an organized crime group, made use of checkpoints to verify the criminal records of citizens. Using national identification and driver’s licenses, the police would identify those with a criminal record. After letting them go, the police would then call off-duty police who would

then lie in wait to carry out what were known as “eliminations.” In the case of the Philippines, although former-President Rodrigo Duterte maintains that he never officially authorized the extrajudicial and extralegal killings of suspected drug users and drug dealers (“Duterte Orders Customs...”), his public encouragement of such actions led to an estimated 7,000 deaths of suspected drug users and dealers by vigilante groups in the first year of his presidency. That number is an estimate because many organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, have theorized that upwards of half of those deaths were perpetrated by government forces and hidden amongst the other deaths by vigilante groups (The Philippines’ Duterte...). In both these cases, vigilante violence was either encouraged by the government or overlooked.



Former-President Robert Duterte posing with a weapon alongside military officials (Thomas).

Another manifestation of vigilantism is community-organized or “grass-roots” vigilantism, in which the community takes it upon themselves to organize against a real or perceived threat that they do not believe is being addressed by the government. This type of vigilantism is not mutually exclusive from state-recognized vigilantism. The organization may be driven by economic inequality (Phillips), perception

of a deep-seated ethnic divide, or political instability and crisis. These motivating factors will be further detailed in the following two sections.

Economic-Driven Vigilantism:

Economic inequality has the potential to serve as the sole driving force behind instances of vigilantism, though it largely works as a contributing factor to the overarching circumstances that create vigilante groups. Its role in those circumstances can differ depending on the country or population in question.

One way that economic inequality can contribute to vigilantism is by creating the problems or threats that vigilantism aims to address. Economic inequality is itself often tied to upticks in crime, especially in areas

where a life in crime can offer upward socioeconomic mobility (Alexander). This cause-effect relationship is most easily observed in communities where drug-trafficking is prevalent. When a person has few or no other options for a stable income, drug-trafficking, even taking into account the violence associated with it, can seem like the easiest and fastest way to obtain income. This appealing quality of drug-trafficking then leads to higher rates of drug-related crimes and violence. In turn, vigilantes take matters into their own hands to try and keep their communities safe where they perceive the government has failed to take action. This phenomenon is often prominent in South American countries where in Mexico and Colombia alone the drug trade is worth billions (Hyland).



Latin American military forces protect a seized shipment of illicit drugs (Felbab-Brown, et al)

Another way that economic inequality can contribute to vigilante justice is by providing the conditions through which patron-funded vigilante groups can be formed. In areas suffering from violence that also have a socioeconomic divide between the wealthy and the impoverished populations, lower-income populations can be employed by the wealthy to act as vigilantes. However, unlike more traditional vigilante groups which function with the goal of community protection in mind, patron-funded vigilantes work for the sake of the patron's safety. These protections may extend from protecting a patron's personhood, to protecting their business interests, to even protecting their other workers. Examples of this type of vigilantism can be seen in modern-day ranchers in Michoacán, Mexico. An interesting quality of patron-funded vigilante groups is that they do not always stay patron-funded, with the Nigerian Bakassi Boys originating as a trader-backed group and evolving into an independent community organization (Phillips).

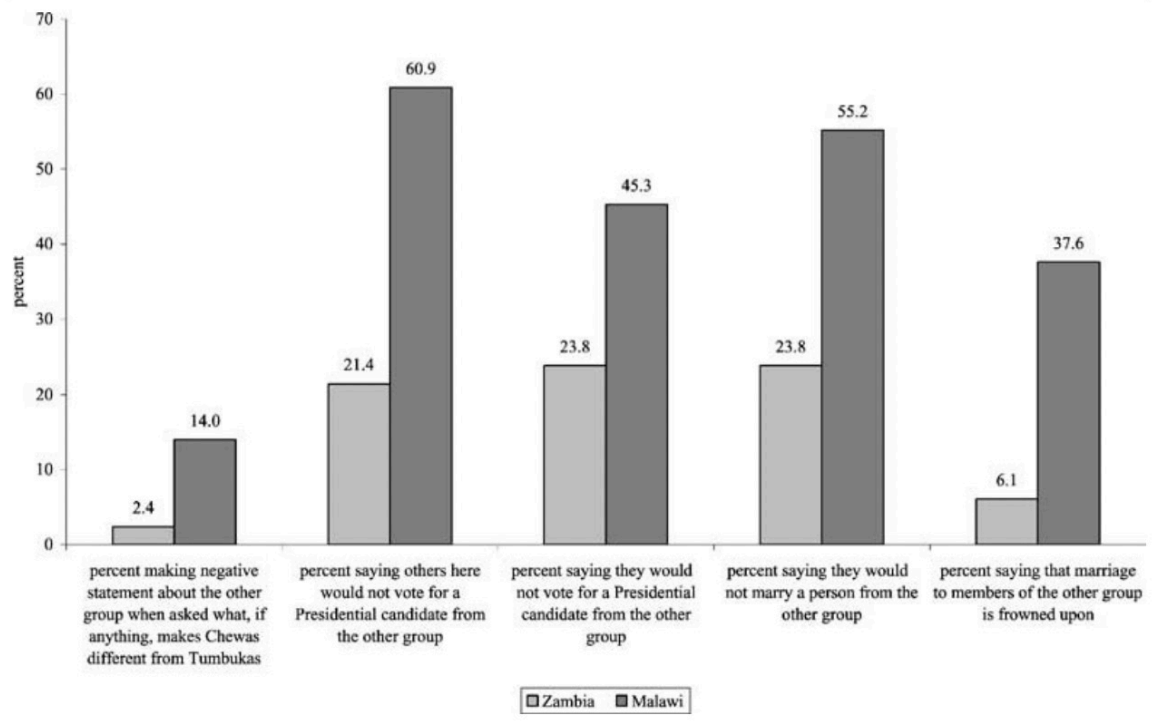
The final and most common way that economic inequality can contribute to vigilantism is by fomenting the feeling of helplessness that drives most vigilante groups. It is not a coincidence that communities without access to sufficient political and economic resources are those most subject to criminal activities, especially extortion. When criminal extortion is paired with government taxation in areas already rife with poverty, vigilantism is more likely to arise, presenting a challenge to safety and stability in the region (Herrera, 338).

Ethnic-Driven Vigilantism:

The perception of an ethnic divide can be a massive contributing factor to vigilante violence aimed at

specific minority groups. The word perception is something to highlight here, as many political scientists have found that there are no inherent differences between most ethnic and/or religious groups that stipulate that they must come into conflict (Chandra). Instead, conflict between different ethnic groups often comes about as a result of government policy or intervention. The role that the government can have in exacerbating ethnic divides can be seen in the example of the Chewas and Tumbukas groups in the nations of Malawi and Zambia. The lasting impact of Western colonization also makes an appearance in this example. In the mid-1800s the territory of what was then known as Rhodesia was partitioned by the British South African Company due to administrative needs, splitting the ethnic groups of the Chewas and the Tumbukas between Malawi and Zambia. Consequently, around two-thirds of each group populated Malawi and about one-fourth of the Chewas and one-third of the Tumbukas populated Zambia. The remaining populations were dispersed throughout other neighboring countries. In Malawi the ethnic groups are a larger portion of the population, leading to efforts by politicians to mobilize them as voting blocs. This has led to campaigns like those of President Banda which are directed against the Tumbukas, so as to foment support amongst the Chewas. In contrast, the populations of Chewas and Tumbukas are far smaller in Zambia and instead of being pitted against one another the two groups view each other as "ethnic brethren..." (Posner). In this specific example, these ethnic divides have not yet yielded mass amounts of vigilante violence; however these do showcase how the concept of an ethnic divide is not a naturally occurring event. Both these groups have similar cultural practices and economic status. The only differences are those presented by and enforced by government media.

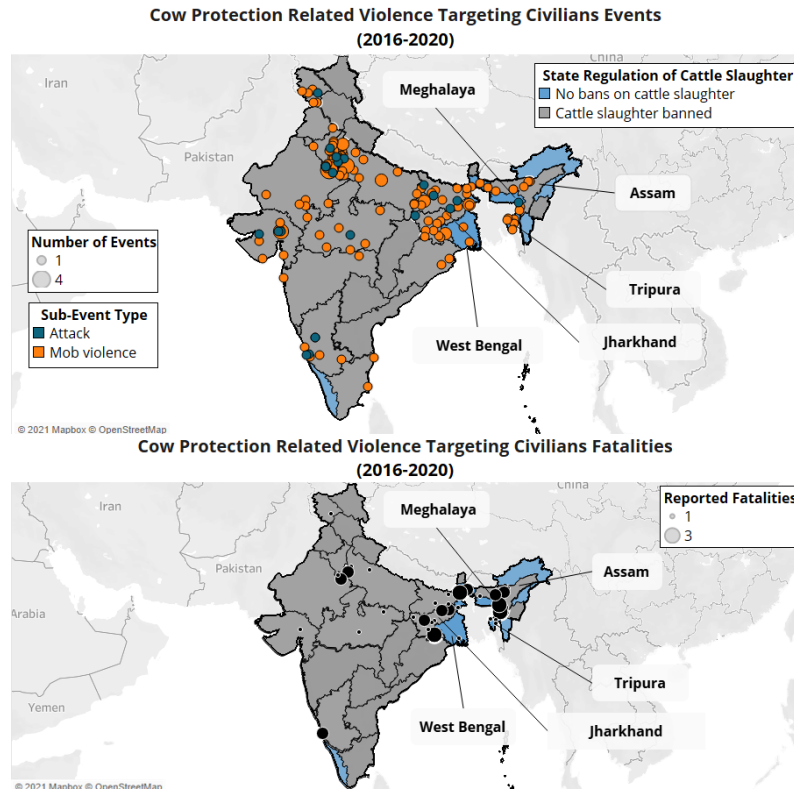
FIGURE 2. Chewa—Tumbuka Relations in Zambia and Malawi Compared



A graph showing the results of a poll conducted with Chewa and Tumbuka populations in Zambia and Malawi about their opinions about the other groups (Posner).

With the understanding that certain ethnic groups do not have more inherently violent tendencies than others, it becomes easier to see the impact of government rhetoric in other examples of ethnic vigilantism. The implications of government driven division can be seen in the vigilante violence of India’s “cow protection” mobs which has seen largely-Hindu vigilante groups attacking minorities—Muslim people in particular—in the name of defending cows, which are sacred in Hinduism. Most international organizations have attributed this recent rise in violence to the ruling BJP or Bharatiya Janata Party party’s inflammatory campaigns against the country’s Muslim population. Despite India’s Supreme Court passing

“preventive, remedial, and punitive” measures to address these mob attacks, the Human Rights Watch found that in most cases, “the police initially stalled investigations, ignored procedures, or were even complicit in the killings and cover-ups...” (India: Vigilante...). Other examples of vigilantism being driven by ethnic division can be seen in the United States with the way organizations like the Ku Klux Klan, which practiced prejudicial actions against minorities such as African-Americans and American Jews, were formed in the 1800s, and white supremacist groups from the past decade (“What is Vigilante...”). (Maskara)



A visual representation of areas experiencing cow related vigilantism in India (Maskara).

Cyclical Violence and Vigilante Groups:

As detailed above, vigilante groups are frequently formed with the intent of addressing a conflict or threat that already exists. However, research has shown that despite all intents and purposes, vigilantism tends to exacerbate and not solve violent situations. This exacerbation can take the form of the violence escalating or becoming cyclical (Herrera).

One reason that vigilantism can contribute to cyclical violence is because of the patterns of trauma it can expose to and perpetuate against local inhabitants. Those exposed to or who experience traumatic stressors such as physical violence are often at a higher risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition characterized by exposure

to trauma as well as a condition known as “appetitive aggression” (Neuner, et al.). Appetitive aggression describes people who take pleasure in acts of violence against their victims (Elbert et al.). Occasionally coexisting, both of these disorders are commonly found in communities like the low-income urban regions of South Africa and Burundi, which are rife with both criminal and vigilante institutions. Young men are typically those most likely to suffer from one or both of these conditions due to their increased risk of polyvictimization, also known as exposure to more than one traumatic circumstance such as both physical and sexual abuse (Hinsberger et al.). Former victims can become victimizers as their enjoyment of violence then results in more self-committed violent acts, which leads to greater enjoyment as well as producing further triggers for traumatic stress.



A gathering of vigilantes in southern Nigeria (Pita, et al.)

Another reason that vigilantism can contribute to cyclical violence is their capacity to elicit retaliatory escalations of violence from either the groups they are fighting with or the community they are aiming to protect. Since vigilante groups work outside of the law they are sometimes responsible for human rights violations themselves. As a result, they may come to represent a threat instead of a source of protection in the eyes of the community (Ray). Alternatively, the tendency of vigilante groups to use any means necessary to protect the community can result in escalation of the conflict, with each side using increasingly advanced weaponry, making conditions more dangerous and making it more likely that violence will continue (Del Rio).

PAST UN ACTION

The United Nations has made a series concerted efforts to address the factors that result in vigilantism, in addition to clearly stating their opposition to “mob justice.” Unfortunately, while many of their resolutions have assisted in improving the treatment of victims of violence and have provided research into the psychology of vigilantism, they have had little effect in reducing vigilantism because of their vague language or status as non-binding documents. Below are some of the largest undertakings by the UN regarding facets of vigilantism. Although UN envoys in a multitude of countries have expressed concern about vigilante groups and vigilante violence, their statements are not listed below as they do not constitute concrete action by a UN committee or organization. It is important to keep in mind that there are

a host of other actions that warrant research to create the most effective solution.

“Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power”- 1985

General Assembly resolution 40/34 was passed in 1985 in the interests of providing victims of criminal behavior with recourse through their nation’s respective criminal justice systems and encouraging access to the reparations and services they may be qualified to receive. A subsequent handbook titled Handbook on Justice for Victims: On the Use and Application of the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for

in 1996 in accordance with Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1996/14 to provide a greater understanding of the initial resolution to UN nation-states. This resolution created the basic international principles of dignity and compassion by which victims of criminal activities are expected to be treated, however like many UN resolutions, it is non-binding (Handbook on Justice...). This resolution also provided very little assistance to governments as to how to deal with the perpetrators of vigilantism because it was aimed at addressing the survivors.

“Protection of Objects Indispensable to the Survival of the Civilian Population” - 2021

Security Council (SC) resolution 2573 was passed in response to a cumulative number of events including the use of sexual violence in Myanmar against the Rohingya people as well as the pillaging of livestock in South Sudan. Such events represent the threat that actors who fail to “subscribe to international norms” and who may “...regard civilians, including aid workers, as legitimate targets” pose to civilians. Although this document was produced with the particular threat of terrorist organizations in mind, its expansion of the international considerations of “indispensable objects” and “no-strike lists” increases the restrictions placed upon any group working

outside international law, including vigilante groups. Despite the primary supporter of the document, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, calling for accountability as a result of this resolution, it too is non-binding and cannot force repercussions onto the non-state actors without violating state sovereignty (“Security Council Strongly...”).

Understanding and Managing Vigilante Groups in the Lake Chad Basin Region - 2023

This study was undertaken by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to better understand the role vigilantism plays in the Lake Chad basin. This basin includes Cameroon, Niger, and Chad although the vigilante groups studied originated in Maiduguri, Nigeria in response to the threat of Boko Haram. The study concluded that, “...conflicts involving vigilantes have been found to have a higher prevalence of human rights violations and civilian casualties...” and suggested that involved nations in the Lake Chad basin should cull support for vigilante groups and subject them to human rights training, as well as government accountability to the law (“Understanding and Managing...”). However, due to this UN action being a study and not a resolution, it was non-binding and could only provide suggestions for actions governments should take.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Mexican Autodefensas:

The state of Mexico serves as one of the most prominent examples of vigilantism in the world, despite the appearance of these community organizations only tracing back to February 2013. Since the mid-1990s, violence associated with criminal organizations has been on the rise in Mexico, driven by competition between cartels like the Los Zetas and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and failed state interventions. Despite state-enacted policies to reduce the influence and power of cartels, including the continuous deployment of security forces and a declaration of war on cartels in 2006 by former-President Calderon,

there has not been an observed decrease. Instead, cartels and their influence have only grown (“Mexico’s Long War...”), even going so far as to play a role in the administration of communities in a phenomenon known as criminal governance. At the same time, income inequality has further contributed to a feeling of helplessness amongst large populations of Mexico. In response to the outsized authority exhibited by cartels and perceived ineffectiveness of the Mexican government to provide economic equality as well as safe living conditions, vigilante groups or autodefensas have sprung up with increasing regularity across Mexico.



Mexican military forces deploy as part of the war on cartels (Estrella).

As of 2021 there are over 50 autodefensa groups that function across the country with increasingly sophisticated weapons including automatic firearms, long rifles, body armor, and other defensive equipment. The equipment has made skirmishes between the cartels and vigilante groups more deadly with over 17,000 homicides reported between January and June of 2019 (“Mexico’s Long War...”). These deaths

come in addition to the even larger death toll exacted by the government’s war on cartels. As a result of military forces being unprepared to carry out police duties, over the course of President Calderon’s term, from 2006 to 2012, 120,000 homicides were reported (Id), double the amount of people killed during his predecessor’s term. A similar pattern was observed during the presidency of Calderon’s successor Enrique

Nieto, who also relied upon military forces to combat cartels in addition to creating a new national police force called the gendarmerie. Despite homicides seeming to decline in the first few years of Nieto's presidency, by 2015, homicides were at their highest level in Mexico history (Id).

Even when current President Obrador allegedly moved away from military measures to address cartel violence with his "hugs not bullets" campaign, he too still relied upon a military-led national guard to back up his policies. Obrador's seemingly groundbreaking socioeconomic centered approach included an anti-corruption drive and the disruption of cartel finances, however it has resulted in the same homicide rates as Nieto (Olson). This case study highlights the complexity of the conditions from which vigilantism often stems, as both the government and criminal actors can be at fault for the unsafe conditions experienced by vulnerable communities. It represents how the external threat from criminal governance and the ineffectual actions of the government in addressing economic inequality and said threat can prompt vigilante violence, perpetuating cyclical conflicts.

Case Study 2: Haiti's "Bwa Kale"

Haiti is a nation that has rarely experienced stability in the history of its existence, frequently sporting the title of the "poorest nation in the Western hemisphere" (Flows). Although devastating natural disasters such as Hurricane Matthew and massive earthquakes have certainly contributed to that instability, the perpetual instability of Haiti can largely be attributed to the unfortunate legacy of colonialism. Haiti, formerly known as the French colony Saint Domingue, launched a revolution for independence in 1791 and officially became the second independent state in the Americas, following the United

States, in 1804 ("The United States..."). Despite this independence Haiti, as a fledgling state, had few allies as most countries did not want to encourage similar revolutions by their enslaved populations. Thus, when the French appeared on the shores of Haiti in 1825, demanding reparations, Haitians had no choice but to concede. The debt amounted to CHF 100 million (francs), or USD 21 billion in modern U.S. dollars and was not paid off until 1947 (Choi). With reparations acting as handicap to Haiti's development, today they sport "a per-capita annual income of \$350, a power grid that fails on a regular basis and a network of roads that's more than 50-percent unpaved," in addition to being, "plagued by drought, food shortages and a struggling economy..." (Flows).



A depiction of the Haitian Revolution by Haitian-American artist Ulrick Jean-Pierre

These conditions have not lent themselves to political stability, and amidst Haiti's problems gang-violence looms large. At the beginning of 2021, President Jovenel Moise was assassinated, creating a power vacuum that his chosen de facto leader Prime Minister Ariel Henry has been unable to fill. An estimated 200 gangs populate the island nation, with 95 being centered in the capital Port Au Prince, and many of

which are vying for political power, strewing carnage in their wake (“Gangs of Haiti...”). With a thinly stretched police force, citizens in April 2023 decided to take the law into their own hands, forming the Bwa Kale. The term “bwa kale” translates to “peeled wood” in Haitian Creole, a slang term for male dominance and power (“Haiti Sees Rise”). The lasting impact of the Bwa Kale remains to be seen, however early reports from humanitarian activists have reflected what has come to be the expected trade-off of vigilantism. Although the amount of gang-related

kidnappings and gang-related killings have dropped, the cumulative number of deaths, injuries, and kidnappings in the country has increased with innocent people continuing to be caught in crossfire (“Haiti Sees Rise”). Similar to Mexico’s autodefensas, the Bwa Kale organized in response to the direct threat of gang-violence. However, the case study of the Bwa Kale encourages the consideration of how historical colonization and political instability play a role in vigilantism and vigilante violence (Coto).

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

In the past DISEC has been able to pass a variety of resolutions applicable to the topic of vigilantism including mobilizing a specialized task force to address gang violence in Haiti, restricting the international trade of conventional arms through the Arms Trade Treaty, and recognizing the unique dimensions of armed violence against women and minorities. Under the United Nations Charter, Article 14, DISEC also has the capacity to, “recommend[ing] measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation...” which can include economic infrastructure when working in conjunction with other UN organs. The kinds of

problems delegates should be providing solutions for include the following:

- Government responses to criminal activity (ie the corruption of local municipalities)
- The escalation of conflict between vigilantes and other actors through more deadly weaponry
- The social and economic pathways that drive communities to violent self-determination
- The state-facilitation of actions and/or actors that work “beyond-the-law”
- Radicalization of vigilantes along ethnic and/or religious lines

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How has perception of the problem vs the reality of the problem impact this topic in your country? How does the media cover the topic and for what reason may they cover it in a specific way?
2. What divides (e.g. political, economic, religious, or social) contribute to your country's stance on this issue?
3. How effective was UN legislation in managing violence in your geographic region or state? Would your nation have signed a more binding agreement had it been offered?
4. Are there any other international actions, not specifically addressing vigilantism, that may play a role in addressing this topic?

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Lynsey. "The Link between Drug Trafficking and Poverty." *The Borgen Project*, 30 Nov. 2019, borgenproject.org/drug-trafficking-and-poverty/.
- Bateson, R. (2021). The Politics of Vigilantism. *Comparative Political Studies*, 54(6), 923–955. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414020957692>
- Chandra: Chandra, Kanchan. "What Is Ethnic Identity and Does It Matter?" *Annual Review Political Science*, 2006
- Choi, Hyeyoon (Alyssa). "How Colonial-Era Debt Helped Shape Haiti's Poverty and Political Unrest." *ABC News*, 24 July 2021, [abcnews.go.com/US/colonial-era-debt-helped-shape-haitis-poverty-political/story?id=78851735#:~:text=The%20French%20recognized%20Haiti%27s%20independence,%2421%20billion%20\(USD\)%20today.](https://abcnews.go.com/US/colonial-era-debt-helped-shape-haitis-poverty-political/story?id=78851735#:~:text=The%20French%20recognized%20Haiti%27s%20independence,%2421%20billion%20(USD)%20today.)
- Coto, Danica. "Vigilantes in Haiti Strike Back at Gangsters with Brutal Street Justice." *AP News*, 5 June 2023, apnews.com/article/haiti-gangs-vigilantes-street-justice-crime-murder-7c3fcdfeec012c80d1fc9e58c61ed7cc.
- Del Rio, Juan. "Do Vigilante Groups Reduce Cartel-Related Violence? An ..." *Taylor and Francis Online*, 30 Sept. 2020, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1816683.
- Duterte Orders Customs Chief to Shoot, Kill Drug Smugglers* | *AP News*, 21 Sept. 2020, apnews.com/1987eb2a568d773b36b578bda820abe4.
- Elbert T, Weierstall R, Schauer M. Fascination violence – On mind and brain of man hunters. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*. 2010;260(2):100–105.
- Felbab-Brown, Vanda, et al. "The Network Effect: Trafficking in Illicit Drugs, Money, and People in Latin America." *Brookings*, 12 Aug. 2016, www.brookings.edu/articles/the-network-effect-trafficking-in-illicit-drugs-money-and-people-in-latin-america/.
- Flows, Capital. "In 1825, Haiti Paid France \$21 Billion to Preserve Its Independence -- Time for France to Pay It Back." *Forbes*, 12 Oct. 2022, [ww.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2017/12/06/in-1825-haiti-gained-independence-from-france-for-21-billion-its-time-for-france-to-pay-it-back/?sh=622d092e312b](https://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2017/12/06/in-1825-haiti-gained-independence-from-france-for-21-billion-its-time-for-france-to-pay-it-back/?sh=622d092e312b).

- Herrera, Joel Salvador. “The Limits of Resistance to Criminal Governance: Cyclical Violence and the Aftermath of the Autodefensa Movement in Michoacán, Mexico.” Taylor & Francis, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17440572.2021.2024805>.
- Hinsberger, Martina, et al. “Full Article: Perpetuating the Cycle of Violence in South African Low ...” *Taylor and Francis Online*, 7 Jan. 2016, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/ejpt.v7.29099.
- Maskara, Shreya. “Cow Protection Legislation and Vigilante Violence in India.” *ACLEDA*, 6 May 2021, acleddata.com/2021/05/03/cow-protection-legislation-and-vigilante-violence-in-india/.
- Neuner F, Schauer M, Karunakara U, Klaschik C, Robert C, Elbert T. Psychological trauma and evidence for enhanced vulnerability for posttraumatic stress disorder through previous trauma among West Nile refugees. *BMC Psychiatry*. 2004;4(1):34. [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar] [Ref list]
- Olson, Jared. “How AMLO Has Fueled Mexico’s Drug War.” *Foreign Policy*, 23 June 2022, foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/23/mexico-drug-war-amlo-lopez-obrador-demilitarization-national-guard-human-rights/.
- Phillips B. J. (2017). Inequality and the emergence of vigilante organizations: The case of Mexican auto defensas. *Comparative Political Studies*, 50(10), 1358–1389.
- Pita, Adrianna, et al. “Quality. Independence. Impact.” *Brookings*, 5 July 2023, www.brookings.edu/.
- Posner, Daniel N. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi: American Political Science Review.” Cambridge Core, Cambridge University Press, 1 Nov. 2004
- Ray Abrahams, “Sungusungu: Village Vigilante Groups in Tanzania,” *African Affairs* 86, no. 343 (1987): 179–196
- Rosenbaum, H. Jon, and Peter C. Sederberg. “Vigilantism: An Analysis of Establishment Violence.” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1974, pp. 541–70. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/421337>. Accessed 5 June 2023.
- “Security Council Strongly Condemns Attacks against Critical Civilian Infrastructure, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2573 (2021) | UN Press.” *United Nations*, 2021, press.un.org/en/2021/sc14506.doc.htm.

Thomas, Ben. “Philippines’ Duterte Ends Term.” *The Japan Times*, 19 May 2013, www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/06/28/asia-pacific/politics-diplomacy-asia-pacific/philippines-duterte-ends-term/.

“Gangs of Haiti: Expansion, Power and an Escalating Crisis.” *Global Initiative*, 14 Apr. 2023, globalinitiative.net/analysis/haiti-gangs-organized-crime/.

“Handbook on Justice for Victims: On the Use and Application of the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.” *Unodc.Org*, 1999, www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/publications/standards_9857854.pdf.

“Haiti Sees Rise of ‘vigilante justice’ as Gang Violence Soars.” *Gun Violence News | Al Jazeera*, 17 May 2023, www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/17/haiti-sees-rise-of-vigilante-justice-as-gang-violence-soars.

“India: Vigilante ‘Cow Protection’ Groups Attack Minorities.” *Human Rights Watch*, 28 Oct. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/19/india-vigilante-cow-protection-groups-attack-minorities.

“Mexico’s Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 7 Sep. 2022, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels#:~:text=Recent%20Mexican%20administrations%20have%20responded,cartels%20shortly%20after%20taking%20office.

“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).” *Mayo Clinic*, 13 Dec. 2022, www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967.

“The Philippines’ Duterte Incites Vigilante Violence.” *Human Rights Watch*, 28 Oct. 2020, www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/19/philippines-duterte-incites-vigilante-violence.

“The United States and the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804.” *U.S. Department of State*, history.state.gov/milestones/1784-1800/haitian-rev#:~:text=The%20Haitian%20Revolution%20created%20the,States%20became%20independent%20in%201783. Accessed 6 July 2023.

“Understanding and Managing Vigilante Groups in the Lake Chad Basin Region: United Nations Development Programme.” *UNDP*, 2023, www.undp.org/africa/publications/understanding-and-managing-vigilante-groups-lake-chad-basin-region.

“United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/ga/first/. Accessed 6 July 2023.

“Vigilantism.” *Vigilantism | World Problems & Global Issues | The Encyclopedia of World Problems*, encyclopedia.uia.org/en/problem/134403. Accessed 5 June 2023.

“What Is Vigilante Justice?” *YouTube*, 2 Sept. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=dr9ADAf18ng.



TOPIC B: CLIMATE CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

TERMS TO KNOW

Climate conflict: A descriptor that can be applied to any surge in violence exacerbated by or caused by climate change and its impacts on infrastructure, access to natural resources, and/or human displacement.

Desertification: The process by which land, often previously fertile, is transformed into desert.

Greenhouse Gas: A gas such as carbon dioxide or methane that captures infrared radiation in the atmosphere, trapping heat and warming the planet (“U.S. Energy Information...”).

Pastoralism: A largely nomadic style of living, prominent on arid and dry land, in which a community supports itself through the domestication and upkeep of livestock (“Seven Reasons Why...”).

Climate change: The effect that warming temperatures across the planet, caused by greenhouse gasses, has on weather patterns and other natural cycles (“Climate Action Fast...”).

Sea-level rise: One of the effects of global warming in which melting ice and thermal expansion (the phenomena by which water expands when heated) has led to an increase of the ocean’s height by 1.8 centimeters per

year (“Sea Level Rise...”).

Hostile environmental modification: The use of a technique to alter an environment for use in an armed conflict.

Climate refugees: Persons displaced due to environmental causes including sea-level rise, natural disaster, drought, and/or similar circumstances. A colloquial term used in place of the official UNHCR definition of “persons displaced in the context of disasters and climate change” (“How Climate Change...”).

Water stress: When the demand for water exceeds that available either due to lack of quantity or quality (“Water Stress...”).

Water Risk: The calculated likelihood of a nation to experience a challenge as a result of water either through water scarcity, water stress, flooding, drought, etc. (“What Do ‘Water...”).

Types of Climate Conflict, A Simplified Guide:

- 1. Pastoralist vs. Agriculturist Conflict:** This type of conflict is prompted when either pastoralists lose land to agriculturists because of government policies (a remnant of colonial influence) or because the pastoralists have been driven from their land due to climate events and change.
- 2. Pastoralist vs. Pastoralist Conflict:** An example of this is the Ethiopia/Kenya case study, where two pastoralist communities are put at odds because either land or a water source they were previously able to share has been reduced due to climate change. This type of conflict can be exacerbated when the shared source crosses state lines and a state government decides to back one group against the other.
- 3. Climate refugee vs. Native population:** Climate refugees, displaced from their homes by climate change and/or events, are often perceived to be placing a further strain on limited resources.

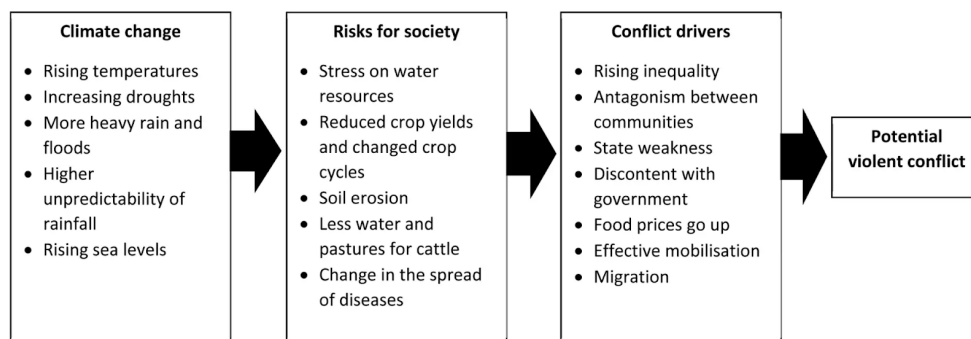
CONNECTION BETWEEN CLIMATE AND CONFLICT

Since the connection was drawn between atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and changes in the global temperature of the Earth in 1896, international and scientific communities have largely centered their conversations around the impact climate change has

on biodiversity, global weather systems, and human health. The relationship between global conflicts and climate change, in contrast, has only been studied recently in the past decade. In a 2022 evaluation, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

(UNHCR) acknowledged climate change as a factor that could increase conflict; however, the UNHCR noted climate change as doing so along “indirect pathways.” These pathways were identified as “socio-economic, governance, and political factors” that may also serve as causes for a nation’s instability outside of climate stressors. The Center for Comparative International Studies in Zürich, Switzerland conducted a separate study and established a similar conclusion: climate change can strongly be tied to conflict when applied to “certain pathways” which include regions dependent on agriculture and states possessing socio-economic and political factors such as “low levels of economic development and political marginalization” (Koubi). A point both studies emphasize is that

climate-change is rarely the sole cause of a conflict. Instead, it typically serves as a metaphorical last straw, driving parties with existing tensions to action over a sudden decrease in their resources. For example, Africa is most commonly cited as a focal point for these and similar studies. Moreover, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Amb. Smail Chergui, has stated that the “conflicts between pastoralists and farmers on the continent (over resources) take more lives than terrorism” in addition to worsening existing violence and instability (“Conflicts Between Pastoralists...”). Due to its geography, economic instability, and vast diversity of ethnic groups, Africa often manifests the pathways noted above, leaving its population vulnerable to conflict.



A flow-chart visualizing the relationship between conflict and climate (von Soest).

Geography and Climate Change in Africa

Africa as a continent is unique because it is almost perfectly divided in half by the equator, and yet due to the shape of its uneven landmass, is host to a multitude of different environmental conditions. In its northern half, African nations sport weather that

is more dry and hot while its southern counterparts present more humid and cool weather. Nations in the southern section of the continent are also more influenced by oceanic factors and tend to possess more of the continent’s water resources (“Africa: Resources”). The dominant weather phenomena in an African nation is largely the determinant of the impact that climate change will have on that nation. However, no

matter the region, it is undeniable that Africa experiences the effects of climate change to a larger degree than any other nation in the world.

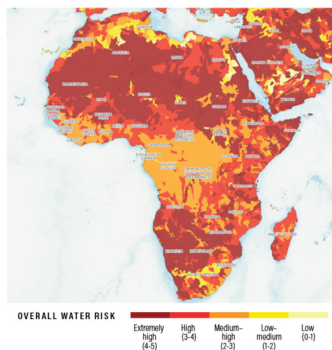
Africa is warming at a faster rate than other locations around the world due to its geographical location, despite only contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated two to three percent. Between 1991 and 2021, Africa's ocean and land temperatures increased at an average rate of 0.3°C per decade, a jump from the 0.2°C rise per decade from

1961-1990 ("State of Climate..."). The disproportionate impact of climate change on Africa becomes clearer when these statistics are compared to the average temperature increase seen globally in a similar time frame. From 1981 to 2022, the average land and ocean temperatures globally rose an estimated 0.18°C per decade (Lindsey and LuAnn). As a result of this rise in temperature, Africa has also seen an increase in extreme weather events, desertification, and disrupted rainfall patterns.

CONSEQUENCES

Strain on Water Resources

The most concerning impact of climate change is its effects on Africa's limited water resources. In recent years, nearly 250 million people in Africa are affected by high water stress ("State of Climate..."). Specifically, researchers noted that arid portions of northern Africa, southern Africa, and Eastern Africa are the most vulnerable to extremely high water risk (Holtz and Golubski et al.).



A map of Africa color coding regions according to their water risk.

Minimal water resources also pose a major threat to the agriculture sector of most African countries. The impact of water stress on agriculture most directly serves as a factor in climate conflict, as agriculture is the primary source of income for 90% of the rural population of sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, more than 95% of Africans that rely upon farming as their primary source of income are also reliant upon rainfall to achieve an acceptable crop yield (Holtz and Golubski et al.). With many nations suffering from the dual threat of both flash flooding as well as extraordinary drought posed by unpredictable rainfalls, the continent has experienced a 34% reduction in agricultural productivity since 1961 ("WMO"). An example of one way these paradoxical problems can disrupt agriculture is in the agricultural economies of Ethiopia and Somalia in 2023. Between 2020 and 2023, the Horn of Africa, also known as the Somali Peninsula, saw what is quoted by many as the "worst drought conditions in history" ("Heavy Rains Hit..."). During that time period, the Juba and Shabelle rivers,

the main water supply for the entirety of Somalia, saw their lowest rainfalls since 1981 (“The Juba...”). This led to the death of over 3.8 million livestock and the displacement of 1.4 million Somalis as climate refugees due to drought (“Heavy Rains Hit...”). This decimated livelihoods and drove nutrition insecurity through increases in food prices and a lack of clean water (Dunne). However, in March of 2023, a sudden deluge occurred, with the long rains or “gu” rains typical to the region starting early and depositing more than 5 centimeters more of rain than typical for the weather phenomena.

Although a period of long rains is typical for Eastern Africa in March, April, and May, the intensity of that 2023’s cycle was more than the area could handle.

While long rains are typically responsible for up to 60% of the total annual rainfall of the Horn of Africa, the intensity of the rains flooded more than 1,000 hectares of cropland, washing away crops and topsoil in Ethiopia and Somalia where agriculture employs 67 to 80% of each country’s respective populations (“The Juba...”). The unusual intensity and movement of 2023’s long rain season was just the beginning of the disruptions in long rains that Eastern Africa will see in the future according to climate scientists. In the long term, rainfalls like these are expected to become drier following a trend that has been observed from 1980 to 2010. In the future, this may lead to short rains, which occur sporadically throughout the year, delivering the main rainfall instead of long rains by 2030 (Id).



A farm house and trees swept away by the overflow of the Juba and Shabelle rivers (“The Juba...”).

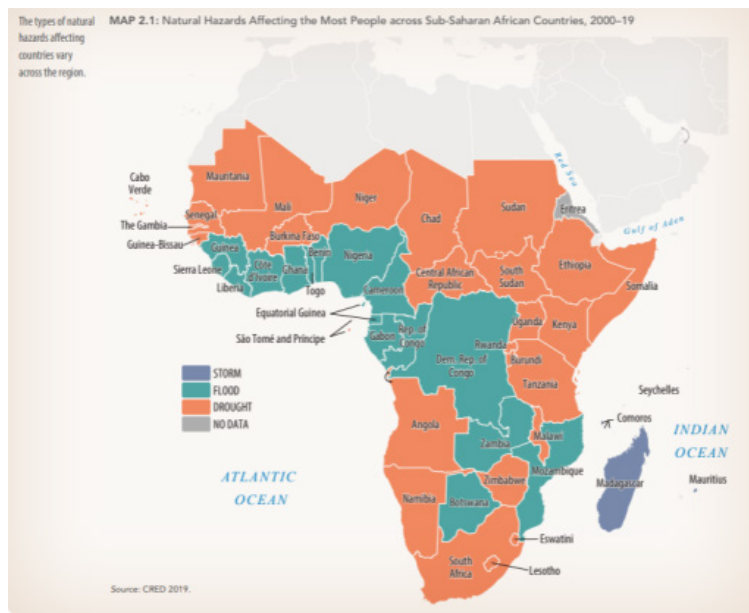
Effect of Shrinking Water Resources

Without reliable weather patterns to support agriculture, the arable land in the vast geography of Africa shrinks. In the past, pastoralist communities had the capacity to peacefully exist on the same stretches

of land for their entire lives; however, the historical practices of such communities are often no longer sustainable. As of 2023, the average farm size in Africa measured no more than one to two acres, driving some groups to seek more dependable fortunes across state boundaries, chasing the standing bodies of water that are still available when rainfall is not (Gettle

man). Unfortunately, many of the water resources utilized by these pastoralists are ‘transboundary,’ meaning that they naturally cross political borders. Water in Africa that is not found to be ‘transboundary’ is often centered in one location, with 589 of the 980 large dams in sub-Saharan Africa being located in South Africa. With the onset of droughts and rising global temperatures, many of these transboundary water sources are receding over political lines, causing clashes between the groups that rely upon these sources for their livelihoods. Even in situations where violence does not immediately occur between pastoralist communities, their displacement rep-

resents the larger “indirect pathways” through which climate change can drive violence. In an example of the long term effects of water stress, decreased productivity in the agriculture sector results in higher price volatility for both farmers and consumers (Woetzel et al.). The resulting unstable economy then foments social instability, creating conditions for conflict as exhibited in Topic A. Tensions surrounding the accessibility of water resources are just one example of the problems exacerbated by climate change. Other events such as natural disasters can, and have, caused mass population displacements, creating the problem of climate refugees.



A map of Africa showcasing the natural disasters most common to different countries (“State of Climate...”).

Extreme Weather Events and Climate Refugees

Among the 14.1 million internally displaced people in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2021, 11.5 million were displaced by conflict and violence, and a shocking 2.5 million people were displaced by natural disasters (“State of Climate...”). Due to the lack of infrastruc-

ture in many African countries, these countries have struggled to address the effects of extreme weather events. However, the overwhelming majority of climate refugees are driven from their homes by the sheer damage of extreme weather events. Regardless of infrastructure, climate disasters are becoming increasingly destructive and frequent as a result of climate change.

Changes in weather patterns are damaging to more than water sources. As noted above, droughts in Somalia led to the displacement of more than 1.4 million Somali people throughout its duration, due to its impact on agriculture and access to clean water. This is just one way droughts can cause displacement. Another way droughts cause extensive harm throughout Africa is through their creation of the dry conditions. When paired with high temperatures, these dry conditions result in widespread wildfires such as those seen in 2022. Throughout northern and central Africa, from February through August, countries including the Central African Republic, Tunisia, and Algeria suffered a series of severe fires, displacing thousands and decimating farmland. In the case of Tunisia, a nation already in the midst of a national financial crisis, a large grain crop the country relied on to reduce the price of grain imports was destroyed (“Heat Wave”). In Algeria, more than 400 heads of livestock were lost, and over 6,000 hectares of farmland were burned (Dunne), not to mention an additional 6,000 people were displaced. In neighboring countries, flooding demonstrated a similar penchant for destruction. During the rainy season of 2022, flash and riverine flooding of bodies of water

such as the Chari and Logone rivers led their banks to overflow. In Cameroon, more than 63,000 people were displaced, while in Chad, more than one million people were affected, with 90,000 people forced to flee their homes (“Millions Face Harm...”). Events of comparable destruction also include cyclones with increased wind speeds and rainfall, heatwaves forcing record high temperatures, and massive landslides. As a result, different communities are driven to interact and compete for resources they had previously never had to share. Furthermore, existing ethnic divides and political barriers also play a role in the development of conflict.

Many violent non-state actors (VNSA) use the migration of certain ethnic groups as a pretext for violence, attacking refugee camps where such populations are migrating. An example of this can be seen in the 2004 National Force of Liberation’s attack in Burundi. In this attack a Hutu rebel faction attacked a refugee camp along the Congolese border that was known to shelter Tutsi refugees, killing 180 refugees. They claimed that they were pursuing Burundian soldiers but there is little evidence to support that claim (Konečná and Mrva).

POLITICAL BARRIERS TO RESOURCES IN AFRICA

In addition to climate events, a state’s government often acts as a major influence on the ability by pastoralist and farming communities to access the natural resources they rely upon (von Soest). Although pastoralists enjoy a lengthy and rich history in areas such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, the informality of many of their traditions has become a

barrier to their existence in recent decades. Pastoralist communities make up a large population of Africa, with the African Union estimating 268 million pastoralists in their last major census. However, they rarely engage in formal treaties or legal agreements to maintain their practices. Instead, they make use of long-standing recognition and appreciation by local

of their Western societies (Velluro). Even after the colonial era, the land policies that decreed pastureland to belong to the state and primarily recognized the land ownership of farmers over herders persisted, impacting the manner in which African governments legislate pastoralist communities (Id).



A group of pastoralists oversees their livestock (Mugonya).

Government policies on other issues are also often intertwined with the severity of a climate conflict. For example, the inability of the Mali and Libyan governments to manage the small arms trade of the weapons used in the overthrow of President Gaddafi in 2011 has resulted in deadlier conflict cycles in the region, fueling revenge killings between communities and thus deepening communal divides (“Pastoralism and Security...”).

Ethnic Divisions in Africa

Ethnicity plays a large role in fomenting conflict when one group feels socially maligned in comparison with another ethnic group. Economic instability and feeble governance are circumstances which frequently accompany these feelings of oppression and discrimination. Whether systemic discrimination is occurring or not is not always relevant if divisions be-

tween the two groups are extreme, as the perception of “us” versus “them” discourages attempts at cooperation or open-discourse. The kinds of deep-seated ethnic communities present throughout Africa can be largely attributed to its long colonial history.



A map of Africa detailing how it was split by 1914 due to the Scramble for Africa (Papaioannou and Stelios).

During a period known as the Scramble for Africa, European colonial powers between the 1860s and the early 1900s signed a series of treaties dividing the continent of Africa into colonial districts. In their division of the continent, colonial powers rarely took into account local political, economic, and geographic conditions, resulting in the partitioning or separation of 229 ethnic groups between countries (Papaioannou and Stelios). The separation of such groups continues to this day like the Maasai people who are divided between Kenya and Tanzania, 62% and 38%

between Ghana and the Ivory Coast, 58% and 42% respectively (Papaioannou and Stelios). One of the effects of the partitioning of ethnic groups was that many of the new colonies supported unequal representations of their ethnic groups in comparison with prior distributions, with one group being significantly larger than the other. Many colonial powers, such as the British, deployed this tactic of divide and conquer to manage their new colony. By favoring the larger population with economic incentives and political supremacy, the European power in charge was able to prevent native populations from working together and organizing against their oppressors. In the post World World II period and the dismantling to the imperial age, the effects of such favor can still be seen. Within countries like Nigeria and Tanzania, that experienced unequal power sharing amongst their partitioned ethnic groups under colonial rule, national identification is rarer than other nations (Robinson). By understanding the significance ethnic identity holds in Africa and to various communities, the underlying tensions that encourage conflict instead of collaboration over resources becomes more apparent. Many of the ethnicities which geographically border each other, due to the history described above, are suspicious of each other prior to being forced to share resources. Once pressed by climate change, as will be seen in case study one, it takes little to prompt conflict.

Weaponization of Resources by Other Actors

The increased occurrence of climate conflicts is often attributable not to the groups that are directly in conflict but the external influence of non-state as well as state actors.

An example of the role the government can play in

climate conflict can be seen in violence in the Lake Chad Basin, which extends over Cameroon, Nigeria, and Chad. The region itself is often highlighted for the destabilization it has experienced as a result of terrorist activities by Boko Haram and the Islamic State Africa Province. However, it is climate change that has yielded the most recent bouts of conflict. In 2021, a sharp increase in the lack of water and land resources available to fishing, farming, and herding companies sparked violence in Cameroon's Logone Birni commune, an area located in the Extreme North Region of the country (Larmarche). As a result, hundreds of deaths were reported, and an estimated 60,000 Cameroonians were forced to seek refuge in Chad (Id). In addition to the violence provoked by the lack of resources, the conflict was exacerbated by reports of high-ranking government officials from both Cameroon and Chad using the disorganization of the region to purchase large herds of cattle and subsequently hire armed herdsmen to restrict water points and grazing pastures (Id). This is one example of how government officials can worsen climate conflict; although they did not physically alter the natural environment (as is sometimes the case with weaponization), they reduced accessibility to a resource for their own personal gain. An additional complicating factor that some governments introduce to climate conflicts is their provision of weapons to pastoralist communities, a phenomena that will be explored in our second case-study of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Terrorist organizations, in addition to the other manners of destabilizing African nations, also play a direct role in driving climate conflict. Similar to the role that government officials can play in taking advantage of resources during times of conflict, non-state actors often perpetuate similar actions, weaponizing

water resources to “terrorize, coerce, and subjugate local populations” (King and LeHane). In pursuit of this effect, the areas targeted are then also more likely to be vulnerable to climate conflict. A prominent example of this weaponization was seen in August of 2014 when the Mosul Dam was captured by the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. In this instance, ISIS used their position as a “tactical weapon,” alternative-

ly withholding water access and flooding villages as a way to combat Iraqi forces at the expense of local populations (Id). While international actions can have a massive effect on improving the conditions that create local conflicts, the role of government forces and non-state actors cannot be discounted in the topic of climate conflict.

PAST UN ACTIONS

UN Actions to Address Climate Change

One of the most important actions taken by the United Nations (UN) to address climate change is the Paris Agreement or commonly referred to as the Paris Climate Accords. The Paris Agreement is a legally-binding international treaty on climate change that was adopted by 196 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on December 12, 2015. The Agreement demands social and economic transformation based on current scientific knowledge (“The Paris Climate...”).

Another important action taken by the UN is the research conducted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which is a specialized agency of the UN and a predecessor to UN Environment Program (UNEP), dedicated to enhancing international cooperation on climatology, geophysics, atmospheric science, and hydrology. The WMO coordinated the State of the Climate in the Africa 2019 report. The report provided insight on current and future climate trends and highlighted the impact that climate

change is having on African economies and sectors such as agriculture. The report has been critical in identifying areas for improvement for addressing climate change in Africa and the formulation of African countries’ National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which are medium and long-term adaptation needs to address climate change (“National Adaptation Plans...”).

Another action adopted by the United Nations to address climate change is the African ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), which is organized by the UNEP. The conference aims to improve collaboration to tackle environmental challenges in Africa such as climate change. The nineteenth session of AMCEN occurred in August of 2023 and aimed to enhance collaboration among several institutions and improve the implementation of regional and global environmental frameworks.

UN Actions to Address Climate Conflict

While the UN has taken critical actions to combat

climate change, despite recognizing the causal relationship between conflict and climate. In December of 2021, a draft resolution was proposed presenting that climate change be incorporated as a “central component into comprehensive conflict-prevention strategies of the United Nations, to contribute to the reduction of the risk of conflict relapse”. Co-sponsored by Niger and Ireland, the proposal was narrowly voted down with 12 in favor, India and the Russian Federation against, and China abstaining with the argument that there were better forums to discuss climate-based conflict. The basis for the rejection was upheld under Chapter VII of the UN Charter which allows a resolution to be rejected due to the negative vote of a permanent member (“Security Council Fails...”).

Although there have been few resolutions to address climate conflict directly, there have been multiple UN actions regarding pastoralist communities that have been incredibly influential. One such resolution was the UN Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, ratified in 1977 during the UN Conference on Desertification in September of the same year (PASTRES). This conference and resolution were detrimental to pastoralist communities across Africa because they normalized the narrative that pastoralist

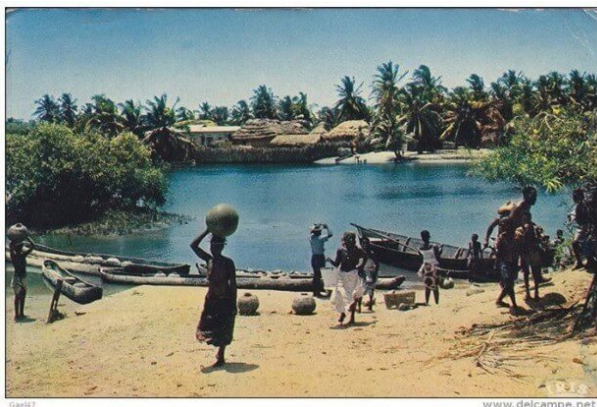
communities should be moved to more ‘rational and sedentary’ systems as they were to blame for the environmental degradation from which desertification results. Eventually, this line of thinking led to the development of other programs such as the Green Wall which promoted the increased plantation of flora across Africa. These practices were passed with good intention but with a disregard for the reality of pastoralist communities in Africa, which typically work within natural systems, not against, and the programs and ideology helped disrupt pastoralism almost to the same degree as climate change.

An example of a recent UN action that has been beneficial to the pastoralist communities in Africa was the 2011 African Pastoral Policy Framework which laid out suggestions for how African nations can provide legislative, operation, and financial resources and measures to support pastoralism. The reason for doing so was to help pursue the AU Agenda 2063, the African Union’s long term plan to transform the continent into a “global powerhouse” (“Conflicts Between Pastoralists...”). Since 1977, the international community has come to recognize the important role of pastoralist community practices in the African continent, but the lasting effect of past UN actions cannot be disregarded.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Ethnic Identity and Resource Sharing in Mali

Within Western Africa the nation of Mali presents an exemplary case study of how ethnicity and livelihoods can intersect and serve as the basis of climate conflict (Mbaye and Signé). As mentioned in Topic A, ethnic divisions themselves are not inherently violent nor should it be assumed that they are always the cause of a conflict. However, in this instance, ethnic identity is serving as an additional factor to a socio-economic divide that is causing poverty, a restriction of previously shared resources, and that is being exacerbated by climate change. Within Mali, the Niger River Delta has long supported the livelihoods of both pastoralists and agriculturalists or farmers. Local institutions have historically mediated the majority of conflicts between farmers, herders, and fishermen as they arise (Id). The four ethnic groups that make up the majority of the area's occupants are the pastoralist Fulani and Tuareg who are both Muslim and the agriculturalist Songhai and Bambara who practice animism (Id).



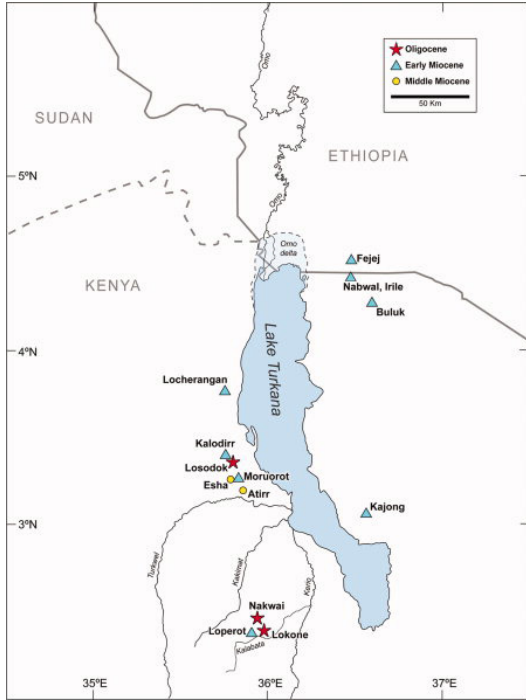
A group of farmers in Mali in the 1970s (Mbaye and Signé)

One of the key differences between the livelihoods of the Fulani and Tuareg and the Songhai and Bambara is the type of crop the groups cultivate. The agriculturalists cultivate rice as one of their staple crops while the pastoralists cultivate burgu to feed their livestock. During dry periods, agriculturalists often encroach on their neighbor's burgu fields as burgu requires deeper water to grow and is less affected by drought (Id). As these dry periods have become more frequent, so too has the conversion of burgu fields to rice fields, with one estimate stating that more than a quarter of burgu fields have been forcibly converted to rice fields since the 1950s (Id). With the degradation of the historical institutions that previously mediated conflict, the pastoralist Fulani and Tuareg have retreated more into their communities, alleging that they are victims of government discrimination and turning to jihadist insurrection groups to protect their livelihoods. Example groups include the MUJAO and the Iyad Ag Ghali, two jihadist organizations led by Fulani and Tuareg leaders respectively. In retaliation, Bambara and Songhai agriculturalists frequently head counter-attacks, submerging themselves into a cycle of conflict that continues to become worse with climate change (Id). This case study exhibits not only the intersection of ethnic identity and climate change in prompting conflict but also how the absence of government structures can create a sense of neglect and bypass the chance for reconciliation.

Case Study 2: Ethiopia/Kenya and the Omo-Turkana Basin

The ongoing conflict centered around the Omo-Turkana basin, along the border of Ethiopia and Kenya,

of the area (Id). The cultural practices that dominate the region are those of the Mursi, Nyangatom, Daasanach (or Merille) and Turkana peoples, all of whom are nomadic pastoralist communities.



A map view of the Omo-Turkana basin

In past decades these groups, like many noted above, have been able to coexist in relative peace, sharing the resources located in their respective nations. However, since 1960 the region has warmed by an estimated 1.1°C, and as a result those vast resources have shrunk considerably. With droughts becoming more frequent, local communities, particularly those situated in Ethiopia have migrated further into Kenya, seeking water and grazing land. There, the mix of distrust over ethnic differences and tension over scarce resources then leads to violence. The relatively porous borders with South Sudan and Uganda, paired with their frequent civil wars then contributes illegal firearms to these pastoralist disputes, often escalating the conflicts into larger battles and mass-

acres. Between 1989 and 2011 conflicts between the Nyangatom, Daasanach, and Turkana caused more than 600 direct deaths.

In addition to global warming impacting the basin, the effect of climate change has then been compounded by government construction projects like the Gilgel Gibe III hydroelectric dam. The dam, thought to be the largest on the Omo river, was built with the aim of increasing Ethiopia's energy supply as well as facilitating the large-scale production of sugar cane in the Lower Omo Valley. However, it has also disrupted the flow regulation necessary to commercial agriculture and degraded fish stocks and fish breeding grounds, placing further strain on rural communities downstream.

In the recent decades both Kenya and Ethiopia have taken steps to try and mitigate conflicts between their pastoralist communities, launching both disarmament and cross-border peace programmes. In Ethiopia the disarmament programs include encouraging the registering of guns and conferring gun ownership to local administration and militias as well as establishing the Regional Center on Small Arms and Light Weapons to develop legislation to reduce cross-border violence. In Kenya, voluntary and sometimes forceful disarmaments are more common, often simultaneously paired with a development component to improve economic conditions and reduce reasons for violence. These disarmament efforts in both countries have been largely ineffective due to the lack of coordination between the parties. This lack of coordination has often resulted in uneven disarmament across the border, encouraging the group with more weapons to take advantage of the temporary weakness of their neighbors. This lack of coordination is also considered a large reason for the failure of cross-border peace programmes.

It is important when crafting solutions to bear in mind the mandate of DISEC. Although climate change is one of the driving forces behind the conflicts noted in this background guide, the focus of this committee should remain on the mechanisms, both human and otherwise, responsible for conflict.

In the past, DISEC has been able to pass a host of resolutions regulating state-facilitated violence against minorities, the sale and distribution of small arms, and the weaponization of water resources. Under the United Nations Charter Article 14, DISEC has the capacity to “recommend measures for the peaceful

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

adjustment of any situation” which can include infrastructure when working in conjunction with other UN organs. The kinds of problems delegates should be providing solutions for include the following:

- Government responses to climate conflict (e.g. the government sanctioning of violence against pastoralists)
- Use of increasingly sophisticated weaponry to escalate climate conflicts
- Government provision of weapons to agriculturists or pastoralists
- The hiring of private security to attack pastoralists and/or climate refugees
- Non-state actors and their actions restricting

natural resources

Questions to Consider:

What impact may colonial ties, current or historical, have on your country’s government policy?

How does your nation distribute resources, be they naturally occurring or not, amongst different classes of people and regions?

How do tensions between those in support of and those opposed to pan-Africanism intersect and some-

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What impact may colonial ties, current or historical, have on your country's government policy?
2. How does your nation distribute resources, be they naturally occurring or not, amongst different classes of people and regions?
3. How do tensions between those in support of and those opposed to pan-Africanism intersect and sometimes mimic ethnic divisions?
4. How has climate change's impact on long-standing natural cycles changed indigenous or pastoralist practices and communities?
5. Aside from agricultural industries, what variables of stability does climate change disrupt in Africa?
6. How may the slowing of trade and economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic have made climate conflict worse or more likely?

WORKS CITED

- “Conflicts between Pastoralists and Farmers on the Continent Take More ...” *African Union*, 2018, au.int/en/pressreleases/20180918/conflicts-between-pastoralists-and-farmers-continent-take-more-lives.
- “Climate Action Fast Facts.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/key-findings#physical-science. Accessed 1 Aug. 2023.
- Dunne, Daisy. “Analysis: Africa’s Unreported Extreme Weather in 2022 and Climate Change.” *Carbon Brief*, 26 Oct. 2022, www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-africas-unreported-extreme-weather-in-2022-and-climate-change/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20IPCC%27s%20most,region%2C%20according%20to%20the%20assessment.
- Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Loss of Fertile Land Fuels ‘looming Crisis’ across Africa.” *The New York Times*, 29 July 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/07/29/world/africa/africa-climate-change-kenya-land-disputes.html.
- “Heat Wave and Fires Damaging Tunisia’s Grain Harvest.” *Reuters*, 27 June 2022, www.reuters.com/business/environment/heat-wave-fires-damaging-tunisia-grain-harvest-2022-06-27/.
- “Heavy Rains Hit Drought-Stricken Horn of Africa.” *NASA*, 2023, earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/151208/heavy-rains-hit-drought-stricken-horn-of-africa.
- “How Climate Change Impacts Refugees and Displaced Communities.” *USA for UNHCR. The Un Refugee Agency*, www.unrefugees.org/news/how-climate-change-impacts-refugees-and-displaced-communities/#:~:text=Climate%20change%20and%20natural%20disasters%20can%20also%20be%20a%20source,food%2C%20water%20and%20land%20rights. Accessed 12 Aug. 2023.
- “The Juba and Shabelle Rivers and Their Importance to Somalia - Somalia.” *ReliefWeb*, 3 June 2016, reliefweb.int/report/somalia/juba-and-shabelle-rivers-and-their-importance-somalia#:~:text=The%20Juba%20and%20Shabelle%20rivers%20are%20the%20only%20perennial%20rivers,from%20a%20neighbouring%20country%20%2D%20Ethiopia.
- King, Marcus and Rianna LeHane. “Drought Is Leading to Instability and Water Weaponization in the Middle East and North Africa.” *The Center for Climate & Security*, 5 May 2021, climateandsecurity.org/2021/04/drought-is-leading-to-instability-and-water-weaponization-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/.

- Konečná, Lucie, and David Mrva. "Refugee-Related Political Violence in Asia and Africa." *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, 17 Sept. 2021, cejiss.org/refugee-related-political-violence-in-asia-and-africa.
- Lamarche, Alexandra. "Climate-Fueled Violence and Displacement in the Lake Chad Basin: Focus on Chad and Cameroon." *Refugees International*, 27 Apr. 2023, www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/climate-fueled-violence-and-displacement-in-the-lake-chad-basin-focus-on-chad-and-cameroon/.
- Mbaye, Ahmadou Aly, and Landry Signé. "Political Turmoil in the Sahel: Does Climate Change Play a Role?" *Brookings*, 18 Mar. 2022, www.brookings.edu/articles/political-turmoil-in-the-sahel-does-climate-change-play-a-role/.
- "Millions Face Harm from Flooding across West and Central Africa, UNHCR Warns." *UNHCR*, 2022, www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/millions-face-harm-flooding-across-west-and-central-africa-unhcr-warns.
- Mugonya, John, and Michael Hauser. "Kenyan Pastoralists: How Changing Livestock Markets Could Reduce Conflict." *The Conversation*, 12 Dec. 2022, theconversation.com/kenyan-pastoralists-how-changing-livestock-markets-could-reduce-conflict-176489.
- "National Adaptation Plans, Vehicles for Climate Service Implementation." *World Meteorological Organization*, 20 Mar. 2018, public.wmo.int/en/resources/meteoworld/national-adaptation-plans-vehicles-climate-service-implementation.
- Papaoiannou, Elias, and Stelios Michalopoulos. "Divide and Rule or the Rule of the Divided? The Effect of National and Ethnic Institutions on African under-Development." CEPR, 15 Nov. 2010, cepr.org/voxeu/columns/divide-and-rule-or-rule-divided-effect-national-and-ethnic-institutions-african-under.
- "The Paris Agreement." United Nations Climate Change, unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement. Accessed 12 Aug. 2023.
- "Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel - UNOWAS." Pastoralism and Security in West Africa and the Sahel Towards Peaceful Coexistence, 2018, unowas.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/rapport_pastoralisme_eng-april_2019_-_online.pdf.
- Pastres. "How Do Changing Policies Affect Pastoralists in Sub-Saharan Africa?" PASTRES, 6 May 2022, pastres.org/2022/04/08/how-do-changing-policies-affect-pastoralists-in-sub-saharan-africa/.

Robinson, Amanda Lea. "National versus Ethnic Identity in Africa." *NATIONAL VERSUS ETHNIC IDENTITY IN AFRICA: STATE, GROUP, AND INDIVIDUAL LEVEL CORRELATES OF NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION*, www.files.ethz.ch/isn/106155/AfropaperNo112.pdf. Accessed 13 Aug. 2023.

"Security Council Fails to Adopt Resolution Integrating Climate-Related Security Risk into Conflict-Prevention Strategies | UN Press." *United Nations*, 2021, press.un.org/en/2021/sc14732.doc.htm.

"Sea Level Rise." *Education*, education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/sea-level-rise/. Accessed 1 Aug. 2023.

"Seven Reasons Why Pastoralism Supports a Better Future." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 11 Dec. 2021, www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1453839/.

"State of Climate in Africa Highlights Water Stress and Hazards." *World Meteorological Organization*, 10 Feb. 2023, public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/state-of-climate-africa-highlights-water-stress-and-hazards.

"U.S . Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." *Greenhouse Gases - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)*, www.eia.gov/energyexplained/energy-and-the-environment/greenhouse-gases.php. Accessed 1 Aug. 2023.

Vellturo , Madeline. "The Erosion of Pastoralism in the Sudano-Sahel • Stimson Center." Stimson Center, 21 Nov. 2022, www.stimson.org/2020/the-erosion-of-pastoralism-in-the-sudano-sahel/#:~:text=In%20the%20late%20nineteenth%20and,pastureland%20belonged%20to%20the%20state.

von Soest, Christian. "A Heated Debate: Climate Change and Conflict in Africa." *German Institute for Global and Area Studies*, 2020, www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-fo-cus/a-heated-debate-climate-change-and-conflict-in-africa#:~:text=According%20to%20predictions%2C%20two%20regions,fertile%20land%20be%20particularly%20pronounced.

"Water Stress." *European Environment Agency*, 14 Feb. 2017, www.eea.europa.eu/help/glossary/eea-glossary/water-stress#:~:text=in%20your%20browser.,Term,%2C%20dry%20rivers%2C%20etc.).

"What Do 'Water Scarcity', 'Water Stress', and 'Water Risk' Actually Mean?" *CEO Water Mandate - Sign the Business Pledge for Water Stewardship*, 2017, ceowatermandate.org/posts/water-scarcity-water-stress-water-risk-actually-mean/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWater%20risk%E2%80%9D%20refers%20to%20the,%2C%20infrastructure%20decay%2C%20drought).

"WMO: Climate Change in Africa Can Destabilize 'countries and Entire Regions' | UN News." *United Na*

tions, 2022, news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1126221#:~:text=Increased%20temperature%20contributed%20to%20a,other%20region%20in%20the%20world.

Woetzel, Jonathan, et al. “How Will African Farmers Adjust to Changing Patterns of Precipitation?” *McKinsey & Company*, 18 May 2020, www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/sustainability/our-insights/how-will-african-farmers-adjust-to-changing-patterns-of-precipitation.

BERKELEY MODEL UNITED NATIONS

PO box 4306, Berkeley, CA 94704 | bmun.org