

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IMPACTS IN THE WORLD AND AFRICA

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Our world is experiencing an ecological crisis which creates environmental degradations, thus increasingly threatening both in the security dimension of states and in the living spaces of communities. In order to tackle with this catastrophic issue, four years ago, the international community, together with the 193 countries adopted a new 2030 agenda which is a bold, ambitious, and historic agenda to promote prosperity and well-being while protecting the environment by 2030. Also known as a plan for people and planet, these goals focus on the three dimensions of sustainable development economic, social and environmental. Why this agenda is adopted? Because of climate change, our future and humanity are in danger of extinction.

Ironically, the actions of the most developed countries are the factors that cause climate change the most, while the countries most affected by the impact of climate change are the least developed countries. Especially, Africa, as a continent with a relatively large number of small states and poor economies, is highly vulnerable to climate change, and the continent's vulnerability arises from a combination of factors, including extreme poverty, high rate population increase, lack of democracy, frequent natural disasters such as droughts, floods, desertification, land degradation and agricultural system.

The fact that there are too many ethnic and religious groups in Africa and all have different colonial backgrounds makes it difficult to read the dynam-

ics of the African countries and indeed the African continent as a whole. In particular, the conflicts and terrorist activities on the continent are explained by ethnic and religious arguments. However, this continent has serious environmental security problems which can be a source, trigger or accelerator of these conflicts.

A case study will be presented as an example of the link between climate crisis and conflicts, the case of Chad Lake and Boko Haram.

Key Words: Climate Change, Environmental Security, Nuanced Impact in Africa, 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals

Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals

Climate Change which is probably the biggest human-induced extinction threat to our world is a serious warning for all of us. Especially, today we are witnessing deeper and numerous environmental crises such as wildfires, hurricanes, tornados, droughts, and floods. These environmental degradations are increasingly threatening both in the security dimension of our states and in the living spaces of our communities. Ironically, the Latest Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates that 95 per cent certain that humans are the main cause of current environmental crisis and related security issues.

In order to tackle with this catastrophic issue, four years ago, the international community, together with the world's leaders adopted a new 2030 agenda, a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals which is called SDGs. These goals are so diverse but at the same time interconnected goals such as ending poverty, reducing inequalities, achieving healthcare for all and promoting peace and justice. Furthermore, they must be reached by 2030. Otherwise, climate change effects will be inevitable, which all of them need immediate climate action before it is too late. To put it another way, what we will do in next ten years will determine our situation for 100 years.

While countries recommended that the SDGs take a forward-looking approach, they also suggested that the new goals be based on experiences from current international goals and targets. With that in mind, it has been observed that particularly successful goals are

- built on general support from society and a scientific consensus regarding the urgency of the problem;
- embedded in effective institutional and political frameworks and governance regimes that ensure implementation and compliance;
- made easier to implement because of the availability of solutions;
- linked to specific and measurable targets.

As can be seen, the idea of sustainable development, reflected in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the world's governments in 2015, is to move beyond traditional indicators such as GDP growth and per capita income, to a much richer set of objectives, including social fairness, trust, and environmental sustainability. The SDGs, for example, draw specific attention not only to income inequality (SDG 10), but also to broader measures of wellbeing (SDG 3). Also, these goals have three fundamental objectives: Economic Progress, Social Justice, and Environmental Sustainability. All three of them should be equally successful because economic growth without fairness and environmental sustainability is a recipe for disorder, not wellbeing. We are witnessing this disorder in the protests in the today's rich cities such as New York, Paris, San Diego caused by the new unfair tax regulations on public transportation.

Additionally, environmental security issues are not only related to protests, it would also be a source, trigger or accelerator of conflicts as well. Especially, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the literature assessing links between environment insecurity and conflict in particular has expanded rapidly. In this regard, this essay will look at environmental stressors such as scarcity, natural resource richness, environmental refugees and extreme heat and also and we will examine a case study from Nigeria, The Case of Chad Lake and Boko Haram and its link between environmental scarcity and violent conflict.

1. Scarcity

Scarcity-related disputes may arise over access to renewable natural resources such as water, arable land, forests, and fisheries. This may be the result of a tightening of supplies inequities in distribution and access. Resource depletion or environmental degradation can exacerbate socioeconomic or political conditions that are more proximate causes of conflict. They can sharpen

hardships and burdens and reinforce the perception that many disputes are of a zero-sum nature. Disputes may arise between different communities and regions. For example, farmers, nomadic pastoralists, ranchers, and resource extractors may find themselves competing with one another, as has happened in a number of recent cases, including conflicts in the Mexican state of Chiapas, Rwanda and Sudan.

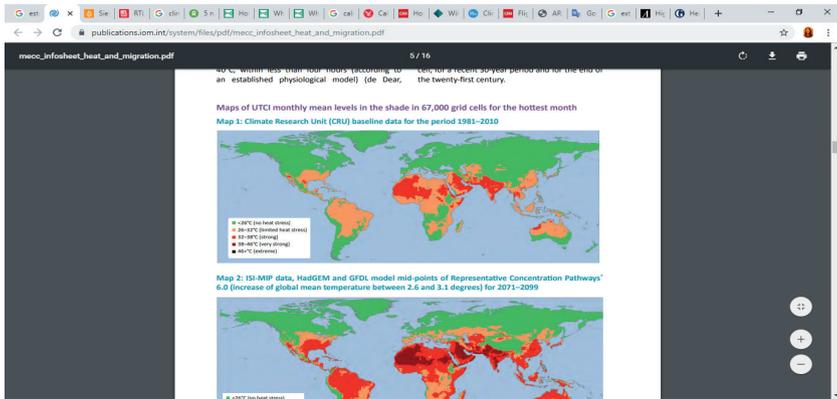
2. Natural Resources

Resource wealth is another potential source of conflict. Oil, along with other natural resources, has also fueled armed conflict in countries such as Angola, Colombia and Democratic Republic of Congo. Natural resources play a role in violence in other ways as well. Large-scale mining and logging projects are often characterized by a highly unequal distribution of benefits and burdens. Typically, a small domestic elite and foreign investors capture the bulk of the revenues, whereas local communities bear an array of potential burdens, including expropriation of land, disruption of traditional ways of life, destruction of arable land. The impoverishment of local people due to resources that make the country rich, can lead a conflict between the local people and the elite, even the state.

3. Environmental Refugees

Because Climate change is forcing people from their homes, bringing poverty on top of increasing hunger, environmental refugees are rising in every corner of the world. For instance, California destructive wildfires drive more than 200,000 people out of their homes just in the last couple of weeks. Furthermore, people in poorer countries are at least five time more likely to be displaced by extreme weather than people in rich countries. On the other hand, the influx of people to another region or state as a result of environmental change, war or human rights violations often puts a significant burden on the state in terms of increasing pressures on land, water, work, social facilities and services. This may lead to conflicts between local people and refugees. These conflicts may escalate due to the sudden and high human influx. Besides, conflicts will be inevitable if political leaders apply xenophobia in both rich and poor countries.

4. Extreme Heat



In this map, the countries that are reddish and red are most suffering from extreme heat. As can be seen from the map, extreme heat appears more in underdeveloped countries. Populations in these regions are extremely vulnerable to heat and less able to adapt to climate change. Extreme Heat leads to rising sea levels, higher wind speeds and more intense and prolonged droughts on agriculture. Also, it causes negative health outcomes such as death from heat stroke, damage to major organs, and physiological functions. Therefore, it reduces productivity of work and development. In most poor countries, higher temperatures are more than 90% likely to have resulted in decreased economic output, compared to a world without global warming. Meanwhile, this effect has been less dramatic in wealthier nations. Furthermore, the effect of extreme heat is more hazardous in sub-Saharan African countries including Sudan, Burkina Faso and Niger, where climate change has driven GDP per capita more than 20% lower that it would have been absent climate change. Consequently, extreme heat may sharpen more the gap between North and South. As a result, it is directly related with global inequalities and it is a matter of environment as well as justice.

Environmental Security Impacts in the World

Currently, we see an average of 400 “extreme weather events” every year. Since June 2017, roughly 41 million people have been affected by flooding. Growing storm surges and tsunamis threaten nearly a quarter of the world’s population.

Ironically, the actions of the developed countries are the factors that cause climate change the most, while countries most affected by the impact of climate change are the least developed countries. Especially, Africa, as a continent with a relatively large number of small states and poor economies, is highly vulnerable to climate change, and the continent's vulnerability arises from a combination of factors, including extreme poverty, high rate population increase, lack of democracy, frequent natural disasters such as droughts, desertification and land degradation.

Environmental Security in Africa

On the other hand, for Africa, there are too many ethnic and religious groups in Africa and all have different backgrounds which make it difficult to read the dynamics of the Africa continent and countries. This makes the continent seen as a single country. Therefore, the conflict and terrorist activities on the continent are explained by ethnic and religious arguments. Addition to ethnic and religious structure, this continent has serious environmental security problems in its conflicts. Therefore, this essay will examine Boko Haram terrorist organization and its relation with environmental security.

Environmental Scarcity and Violent Conflict: The Case of Boko Haram and Chad Lake

According to the global index of terrorism, the most killing organization in the world is Boko Haram in Nigeria. This organization emerged in 1991 in Nigeria to establish a Sharia order. Although Nigeria is country rich in natural resources, Boko Haram is interestingly located near Chad Lake in the North-east which suffers from famine shortage, food and water insecurity.

Why this location? Lake Chad was once the center of Africa's second largest wetlands. It is located in a semi-arid region shared by 4 countries. Thanks to the lake, local people could sustain their livelihoods with irrigation, fishing and agriculture. In 1963, the lake covered 25 thousand square kilometers as big as New Jersey, but has since shrunk by 90 per cent and it will be completely dry by 2030. The fall of the lake left the safety and livelihood of the population dependent on irrigation and fishing in a dangerous position. About 5 million people need food aid due to food insecurity in this region. However, Nigeria has rich natural resources as a country, there is no shortage of water and food in the country in general, only the northeastern region of Lake Chad is experiencing water scarcity. Thus, food and water insecurity contributes to a

general belief that the state is incapable of bettering the lives of disadvantaged people. Groups that are opposed to the state are able to use this belief to their advantage.

At this point, Boko Haram has emerged as an employment provider in Lake Chad region. The economic incentives created by Boko Haram are more effective than the religious motivation in joining Boko Haram due to two crucial reports of the UN.

In September 2017, **the UN Security Council Lake Chad Basin Report** states that the long-running Boko Haram insurgency is the primary cause of the dire humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad basin. Additionally, a survey of **The Journey the Extremism Report of the UNDP** conducted with former members of Boko Haram at different levels of rank indicates that young Muslims in Africa are less likely to participate in Boko Haram through religious motivation.

The main reason they joined Boko Haram reveals that there is a strong belief that the state is inadequate to improve living conditions. As a result, terrorist activities which are regarded as 'high politics' can maximize their impact by using the environmental security problems such as scarcity and food & water insecurity which is seen as 'low politics' to recruit militants. This result does not mean that religious motivation does not play a role; it means that the impact of environmental stressors is of undeniable critical importance in the current situation.

To conclude, our world is experiencing an ecological crisis. Additionally, environmental issues are cross-border issues. An environmental crisis that is seen somewhere in the world can be seen in many different countries and regions. Thus, all of us are effected by its damages and threats. Furthermore, there is no country, boundary or economic sector will be immune against climate change and its environmental security disasters. In this regard, security studies must have an environmental dimension. Because it is highly probable that this ecological crisis that we are experiencing will bring more security problems based on environmental dynamics in every corner of the world.

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