



CLIMATE, PEACE, AND PARTNERSHIP: INSIGHTS FROM GERMANY FOR BRIDGING CLIMATE–SECURITY GAPS AT COP30

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Introduction: The climate crisis as a security challenge

The climate crisis is not just an environmental challenge—it is a profound threat to global stability, touching every aspect of society, from livelihoods and health to governance and peace. As its impacts grow in frequency, intensity, and cost, the links between climate change and security are becoming increasingly clear. Extreme weather events, resource scarcity, and forced displacement are no longer isolated phenomena; they are drivers of instability that ripple across borders, affecting human security, national resilience, and international relations.

Germany has been at the forefront of efforts to broaden the understanding of security to include the risks posed by climate change. By framing climate impacts as a matter of human, national, and international security, Germany and other European countries aim to galvanize action at all levels.[1] However, this approach has not been without controversy. Some emerging economies have expressed concerns about framing climate change as a security issue, warning of potential unintended consequences such as the marginalization of vulnerable groups or the securitization of climate governance.

This paper examines the climate–security nexus through the lens of Germany’s experience, offering insights that are increasingly relevant to global responses. It synthesizes findings from Germany’s National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment, launched earlier this year at the Munich Security Conference, which categorizes climate risks into direct, global, and systemic impacts. The paper also looks toward the future, exploring how insights from the assessment can contribute to discussions at the upcoming COP30—a forum where states under the leadership of Brazil, as host of the conference and champion of climate and environmental diplomacy, can work together to address shared challenges posed by climate change. By aligning their efforts, countries can strengthen resilience, foster equitable development, and advance a global response to the intertwined crises of climate and security. In a world where environmental risks transcend borders, this dialogue is not just relevant—it is essential.

The global climate–security nexus: Risks and realities

We are already living in the climate crisis. The impacts of this encompass significant risks to life, health, and prosperity. And we already know that it will get worse before it might get better—provided we prioritize ambitious climate policy measures now and into the future. Global average temperatures are now higher than at any time in the last 10,000 years (and probably the last 100,000 years),[2] which is the era during which human civilisation has flourished. Moreover, global warming is accelerating. Whereas the world warmed at an approximately linear rate—by some 0.18°C per decade—between 1970 and 2008, this has nearly doubled over the past 15 years to around 0.3°C per decade.[3] Hence, we are in uncharted territory.

[1] Sustainability forms one of three pillars of Germany’s National Security Strategy, see <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>; the EU recently adopted a Joint Communication on the Climate Security nexus, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023JC0019>

[2] Bova, Samantha et al., 2021, “Seasonal origin of the thermal maxima at the Holocene and the last interglacial”, *Nature*, Vol. 589, pages 548–553, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-03155-x>

[3] Hausfather, Zeke, 2024, “Factcheck: Why the recent ‘acceleration’ in global warming is what scientists expect”, *Carbon Brief*, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/factcheck-why-the-recent-acceleration-in-global-warming-is-what-scientists-expect/>

These changes have massive implications for our societies. The immediate physical impacts include a rise in the frequency and intensity of many extreme weather events which undermine human security directly and indirectly, through their effects on infrastructure, livelihoods, economies, and governance. This threatens to ultimately undermine stability at all levels—locally, nationally, regionally, and globally.

Many countries and regional organizations have taken note, giving rise to a policy nexus now often dubbed climate, peace, and security.[4] Pacific Island countries have been among the most vocal on this issue. Their Boe Declaration on Regional Security unequivocally “reaffirm[s] that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific”.[5] The African Union has similarly (and repeatedly) “acknowledged inextricable link between climate change, peace and security in Africa”[6] and is in the process of finalizing a Common African Position on Climate, Peace and Security ahead of COP 30.[7] European countries have pushed this issue in the UN Security Council, where it has gained currency but not consensus, repeatedly becoming a key point of contention among its Members.[8]

Germany’s climate risk assessment: A framework for action

What security risks do Europeans, and Germany in particular, see emanating from the climate crisis? To explore this, the subsequent paragraphs will summarize Germany’s National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment, published earlier this year at the Munich Security Conference.[9] It goes back to Germany’s first-ever National Security Strategy of 2023, in which the German government emphasized that “[o]ur international and security environment is becoming more multipolar and less stable, and is increasingly defined by the existential threat posed by the climate crisis” and committed to commissioning a study by scientific institutions and its Federal Intelligence Service “[t]o improve our ability to assess the impact of the climate crisis on our national security and then arrive at informed choices of action”.[10]

Germany’s assessment structures the national security risks emanating from the climate crisis essentially into three categories: the first category comprises direct climate impacts in Germany with cross-references to the EU as impacts on the Union also have direct implications for Germany. The second category looks at impacts elsewhere in the world that have direct implications for Germany and the EU, as for example in the case of food prices and the risks to stability across many regions of strategic import. The third category analyses indirect impacts that not so much impact Germany directly, but undermine the global system on whose predictability and stability Germany’s national prosperity and security ultimately depends.

[4] United Nations, n.d., “Climate, peace and security: what we need to know”, <https://www.un.org/en/peaceandsecurity/climate-peace-and-security-what-we-need-know>

[5] Pacific Islands Forum leaders, 2018, “Boe Declaration on Regional Security”, <https://pacificsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Boe-Declaration-on-Regional-Security.pdf>

[6] African Union, 2016, “The 585th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the AU: an open session to the theme: Climate Change: State fragility, peace and security in Africa”, <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-585th-meeting-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-au-an-open-session-to-the-theme-climate-change-state-fragility-peace-and-security-in-africa>

[7] Amani Africa, 2025, “Climate Change: Challenges to Peace and Security in Africa”, <https://amaniafrica-et.org/climate-change-challenges-to-peace-and-security-in-africa/>

[8] For a short history, see <https://climate-diplomacy.org/magazine/conflict/climate-security-un-security-council-short-history>; for some of the key issues being discussed, see <https://climate-diplomacy.org/magazine/conflict/climate-change-and-security-short-ga>

[9] Metis Institute, adelphi research, Federal Intelligence Service and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2025, “National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment”, <https://metis.unibw.de/en/nike/>

[10] German Federal Government, 2023, “Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany. National Security Strategy”, <https://www.nationalesicherheitsstrategie.de/National-Security-Strategy-EN.pdf>

CATEGORY 1: DIRECT IMPACTS: GERMANY AND THE EU UNDER PRESSURE

With respect to the direct impacts in Germany and the EU, the first chapter illustrates how the climate crisis is already undermining human security here and now: first, weather-related disasters are becoming more frequent and worse. Overall, the damage from these events was calculated to amount to 145 billion EUR for Germany over the first two decades of this century, with some 1.400 deaths per year.[11] Among these, floods like the Ahr flood in 2021 or the Elbe flood of 2003 with their shocking images stand out, but Germany is simultaneously experiencing increasing problems with drought, which impairs agriculture, but also has negative implications for energy production (need for cooling water), transport (especially bulk transport by ship) and ecosystems. A study published in 2018 estimates that damage to critical infrastructure in Europe due to extreme weather events would increase sixfold by the middle of the century (as compared to a reference period of 1981–2010).[12] Moreover, heat is increasingly becoming a risk for health and productivity even in Germany while global warming drives the expansion of disease vectors such as mosquito and tick species. Yet whereas individual events regularly result in broad coverage, the fact that these events will become more frequent and intense over the coming decades does not yet seem to have fully registered across society.

CATEGORY 2: GLOBAL IMPACTS: RIPPLE EFFECTS BEYOND BORDERS

The second level of analysis examines the risks that the impacts of the climate crisis in third countries engender. Whereas the damage numbers from climate impacts for Germany are high, they are not as existential as these impacts are in many other countries, both because the physical impacts are often even more extreme and because there is less capacity for supporting those most affected. Thus, vulnerability to climate impacts threatens to enhance existing or latent fragilities such as resource scarcity, low public revenue, corruption, subsistence farming, population growth, legal uncertainty, and similar weaknesses in governance. Because climate impacts such as displacement and loss of livelihood can lead to conflicts in host areas while government fragility impedes adaptation measures that could reduce vulnerability, there is a risk of a vicious circle in which vulnerability and fragility reinforce each other.[13]

One way in which climate impacts undermine security are the changes in access to natural resources such as water and arable land that climate change brings. This will test the stability in many regions of the world. Climate impacts push herders in the Sahel and East Africa to adapt their movement both in terms of geographies and seasons while farmers may be pushed to expand agriculture into new areas. This increases the chance of clashes over resources, for example when herders move in before harvests are completed. Whereas there are often mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully, the scale of change and the pre-existing fragility that has undermined traditional mechanisms can overwhelm such institutions.

A similar causal nexus can play out at the intergovernmental level when it comes to transboundary river basins. Although the threat of water wars has been overhyped, there are risks to stability in some basins where conflict resolution mechanisms are either underdeveloped or overpowered by political dynamics which in turn are driven by the (perceived) need to capture as big a resource share as possible—in the context of hydrological change.[14] This dynamic has been particularly pronounced in the Middle East and parts of Asia. On April 23 2025, to use a currently salient example, India suspended the Indus Water Treaty. Whereas this

[11] Prognos, IÖW and GWS, 2022, “Projektbericht ‘Kosten durch Klimawandelfolgen’. Übersicht vergangener Extremwetterschäden in Deutschland. Methodik und Erstellung einer Schadensübersicht“.

[https://www.prognos.com/sites/default/files/2022-](https://www.prognos.com/sites/default/files/2022-07/Prognos_KlimawandelfolgenDeutschland_%C3%9Cbersicht%20vergangener%20Extremwettersch%C3%A4den_AP2_1.pdf)

[07/Prognos_KlimawandelfolgenDeutschland_%C3%9Cbersicht%20vergangener%20Extremwettersch%C3%A4den_AP2_1.pdf](https://www.prognos.com/sites/default/files/2022-07/Prognos_KlimawandelfolgenDeutschland_%C3%9Cbersicht%20vergangener%20Extremwettersch%C3%A4den_AP2_1.pdf)

[12] Forzieri, Giovanni et al., 2018, “Escalating impacts of climate extremes on critical infrastructures in Europe“, *Global Environmental Change*, Vol 48, pages 97-107, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2017.11.007>

[13] For a more detailed analysis, see e.g. adelphi research and PIK, 2020, “10 Insights on Climate Impacts & Peace“, <https://weatheringrisk.org/en/publication/10-insights-climate-impacts-peace> and adelphi research, 2024, “Africa Climate Security Risk Assessment“, <https://weatheringrisk.org/en/publication/africa-climate-security-risk-assessment>

[14] Pohl, Benjamin et al., 2021, Strengthening Water Diplomacy, adelphi research, <https://climate-diplomacy.org/magazine/cooperation/strengthening-water-diplomacy>

was a decision in response to a terrorist attack that the Indian government blamed on Pakistan (rather than climate-induced), the Pakistani response that it would specifically regard “[a]ny attempt to stop or divert the flow of water belonging to Pakistan as per the Indus Waters Treaty ... as an Act of War” illustrates the potential political stakes of such competition.[15]

Fortunately, in most cases competition does not result in armed conflict as affected communities and states respond and adapt in other ways. In response to pressure on natural resources, affected people often move away or turn to alternative livelihoods. This, however, does not always avert all risks of violence as new conflicts can emerge in receiving communities and cities over access to livelihoods and public services. Moreover, the scale of change may again overwhelm societies and governments: on the basis of the current mitigation pathways, modellers have calculated that, by the end of the century, between 22 and 39 per cent of humanity will no longer live in the climate niche that sustains human life.[16] Clearly, the resulting strain on the governments and governance mechanisms of the most affected geographies will be enormous—and, as the assessment argues, governments elsewhere cannot assume that the consequences of that instability will remain confined only to the affected regions.

***The climate crisis, through its impacts on the course of
the main jet streams, increases the likelihood of
simultaneous regional crop failures.***

One area that illustrates the global connections particularly well is food security. The climate crisis, through its impacts on the course of the main jet streams, increases the likelihood of simultaneous regional crop failures. [17] Wheat cultivation areas affected by extreme water scarcity are estimated to increase massively—doubling from the 15 per cent today (already above historic probabilities) under climate change stabilization in line with the Paris Agreement in the period 2041–2070 and quadrupling by the end of the century in the most extreme scenario (RCP 8.5).[18] Simultaneous failures increase the (already considerable) volatility of world market prices—an example of complicated interaction between natural and different governance systems (such as trade restrictions). This is a key driver of instability in many countries, with the “Arab spring” as one prominent example, but it also resonates politically in rich countries (think of the role that egg prices played in the 2024 elections in the US).

Obviously, the climate signal in some of the security consequences described above is much harder to measure and attribute when what we reap are the interaction effects between natural and governance systems. However, that difficulty in attribution does not mean that effects are small and can be ignored; to the contrary, those mandated to ensure national security need to think harder about risks that have the potential to be overlooked.

[15] Singh, Sarita Chaganti and Ariba Shahid, 2025, “What is the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan?“, *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/what-is-indus-waters-treaty-between-india-pakistan-2025-04-24/>

[16] Lenton, Timothy M., 2023, „Quantifying the human cost of global warming“, *Nature Sustainability*, Vol. 6, pages 1237–1247, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-023-01132-6>

[17] Kornhuber, Kai et al., 2023, „Risks of synchronized low yields are underestimated in climate and crop model projections“, *Nature Communications*, Vol. 14, Article number: 3528, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-38906-7>

[18] Trnka, Miroslav et al., 2019, “Mitigation efforts will not fully alleviate the increase in water scarcity occurrence probability in wheat-producing areas“, *Science Advances*, Vol. 5(9), <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.aau2406>

CATEGORY 3: SYSTEMIC RISKS: FEEDBACK LOOPS AND INSTABILITY

This is even more true for the third category of risks, which can be summarized as system feedback effects. The first risk relates to the global energy transition. In principle, this transition is not only necessary, but also generally peace positive, insofar as it reduces Europe's dependence on fossil fuels. Importing such fossil fuels has often funded autocracies, particularly Russia, with these regimes often investing in foreign policies that reduce European security. However, transitioning to renewable energies raises two types of risk. First, the destabilizing impacts that decarbonization will have for fossil fuel income dependent states could generate or exacerbate security risks related to the fragility of these states. Secondly, there are security risks related to the rush for the new, green economy. These can again be categorized into two sub-categories: there are risks with respect to local conflicts in some of those areas where these resources needed for the green energy transition are being mined (Eastern DRC being a prime example), but also with respect to broader geopolitics. As is already very evident in US–China relations (although currently more focused on access to advanced chips rather than more upstream production), the questions of who controls the different steps of the production process; of what levers this offers for geopolitical competition; and of how using these levers might be misunderstood, is a critical field of competition.

If climate policy remains globally insufficiently ambitious, there is a risk that the injustice of climate impacts undermines the legitimacy of the current global order. Whereas that order is far from perfect, decreasing stability and predictability carries high costs.

A second set of system risks relates to the delegitimization of systems of governance at the global and national levels. If climate policy remains globally insufficiently ambitious, there is a risk that the injustice of climate impacts undermines the legitimacy of the current global order. Whereas that order is far from perfect, decreasing stability and predictability carries high costs. We are seeing this happening with respect to global trade (certainly with respect to the actions of the Trump administration) as well as to the decaying norm against territorial conquest, both of which are undermining the security and prosperity of Germany and Europe—but whose ultimate demise would have strong global repercussions.

A closely related legitimacy risk pertains to the possible reactions of states around the world to decaying multilateralism and an ongoing climate crisis. How will states cope? One of the risks is that, despairing of the system, they try to help themselves, whether by securing access to resources by way of military power, or by dabbling with geo-engineering—which then might have very divisive results because of the unintended (or maybe intended, or perceived to be intended) consequences for others.

Finally, a third set of legitimacy risks relates to what the much more ambitious climate policy that we need might do to social cohesion in Germany and within the EU. On the one hand, there is a risk of under-delivery of climate policy. The state's inability to respond adequately to an existential threat might undermine its legitimacy and political cohesion. On the other hand, there is a risk that an ambitious attempt at transformation undermines cohesion because climate policy is primarily and increasingly seen as a culture war issue. This narrative is being pushed by hostile actors, with NATO accusing Russia of being “the main driver of hostile communications in online conversations about the green energy transition on social media and web news media”^[19] since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The two risks of insufficient ambition and popular backlash, whether fuelled by hostile powers or otherwise, also poses risks for EU cohesion. With Southern Europe more strongly impacted while having less fiscal capacity to respond, lack of ambition in mitigation and solidarity could result in political recriminations.

[19] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2024, “NATO Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment“, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/7/pdf/240709-Climate-Security-Impact.pdf, p. 27

So what? Opportunities amid crisis: The case for a green transition

Beyond the many specific pathways in which global environmental change threatens national security, what can we take away? This paper emphasizes three points: first, we need to be careful to not look at the security risks of the climate crisis too narrowly, in terms of only the direct impacts. What the German assessment underlines is that there are many other global and transboundary impacts that are hard to foresee and attribute, but that might have massive consequences nonetheless. As the assessment starts off, “anyone thinking about security needs to think about the climate as well”.[20]

Secondly, it is not all doom and gloom. Whereas the assessment, as per its mandate, focused on assessing the risks of the climate crisis and its second-order impacts, there are significant opportunities in the transformation that is necessary and starting to happen. This becomes especially clear if we compare the costs of transformation to the costs of inaction: the cost of limiting emissions is far smaller than the damages those emissions will cause. A paper in *Nature* from 2024 on the macroeconomic consequences of climate change estimates that the “world economy is committed to an income reduction of 19%” until 2050 (relative to a baseline without climate impacts), with much higher costs to occur in the second half of the 21st century.[21] The same paper estimates that this already unavoidable damage (which will only be realized in the coming decades) will outweigh the cost of limiting the global rise in temperature to 2°C sixfold.

The latest IPCC report estimated that the benefits of lower air pollution alone (as a co-benefit of emission reductions) have a similar and possibly greater economic magnitude as the costs of reducing emissions.[22] Currently, some seven million people die annually from air pollution, according to the WHO.[23] These impacts extend to the EU. In 2021, more than 250,000 people died prematurely from air pollution,[24] illustrating the massive cost of the status quo. However, it also underlines the potential of ambitious environmental policy, if we compare it to the more than 390,000 premature deaths attributable to air pollution recorded as late as ten years earlier, in 2011.

The benefits are not limited to such avoided costs. Looking forward, it is fairly certain that the markets of the future will be green. To take but the greatest success story, the price of solar PV has been plummeting. A recent study concluded that “a global irreversible solar tipping point may have passed where solar energy gradually comes to dominate global electricity markets, without any further climate policies”, with solar energy predicted to have the lowest levelized cost of electricity, including system storage costs, in most countries by 2027 (and even in Greenland by 2030, beating off-shore wind).[25] Knowing that this transition is a question of when rather than whether, moving early and preparing for that future implies significant opportunities for countries’ relative position in green markets.

[19] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2024, “NATO Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment”, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/7/pdf/240709-Climate-Security-Impact.pdf, p. 27

[20] Metis Institute, adelphi research, Federal Intelligence Service and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, 2025, “National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment”, <https://adelphi.de/en/publications/national-interdisciplinary-climate-risk-assessment>, p. VII

[21] Kotz, Maximilian et al., 2024, “The economic commitment of climate change”, *Nature*, Vol. 628, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-024-07219-0.pdf>

[22] IPCC, 2022, “Mitigation of Climate Change (WGIII)”, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_Chapter03.pdf, p. 300

[23] World Health Organization, n.d., “Air pollution”, https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/air-pollution#tab=tab_1

[24] European Environment Agency, 2024, “Premature deaths due to exposure to fine particulate matter in Europe”, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/health-impacts-of-exposure-to>

[25] Nijse, Femke J.M.M., 2023, “The momentum of the solar energy transition”, *Nature Communications*, Vol. 14, Article number: 6542, <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-41971-7>

As set out above, the declining role of fossil fuels entails risks to stability that need to be managed. Overall, however, it should result in geopolitical gains for Europe. By shifting resources from fossil fuel exporters—many of whom use revenues from EU imports of fossil fuels to pursue foreign policies that contradict EU interests—to domestic producers and more diversified networks, it should strengthen Europe's autonomy (while simultaneously contributing to lesser pressures from the impacts of the climate crisis).

Thus, while there will always be specific policy trade-offs, there is no fundamental conflict for the EU between the objectives of mitigating environmental and traditional security. Whether it is about containing the climate crisis and its impacts, or containing hostile powers such as Russia, the fundamental environmental, economic and security trends align whence the conclusion that anyone thinking about security needs to think about the climate as well.

What should the response look like?

Whereas the assessment as per its mandate focuses on the risks that the climate crisis entails for German national security, it also leaves some pointers for the response side, identifying four areas of action. The first concerns decarbonization in Germany and the EU. This decarbonization needs to be fast and socially responsible for three key reasons: first, to not further enhance the global climate challenge; second, to safeguard Germany and Europe's international credibility, and thereby the legitimacy of the current global multilateral order (that needs reform, but should arguably avoid wholesale demolition); and third, to demonstrate that embracing the transformation is not only possible, but beneficial (while, in fact, benefiting from that transformation).

The second area focuses on the need to continue pushing for global decarbonization. While a disproportionate and historically significant emitter, the EU by now contributes only a small and decreasing portion of the problem, falling from 15.2 per cent in 1990 to 6.0 per cent in 2023.[26] The fact that the Union cannot hope to solve the problem by itself must not be a reason to lean back, but it means that other powers need to be persuaded to pursue ambitious climate policies, too. Now, more than ever, foreign policy is climate policy.[27]

Whereas the first two action areas cover the efforts to limit the scale of the problem, we already have a problem, and it is still growing. The third and fourth action areas hence cover adaptation policies in the widest sense. Number three concerns the need to build resilience at home. Here, 'home' very clearly is not limited to Germany but has a European dimension because closer cooperation will bring down the overall costs of resilience—from linking grids to mutually reinforcing disaster response and civil protection.

This leaves us with the fourth and maybe most critical point, adaptation beyond Europe's borders, by which the assessment includes supporting the stability and resilience of the multilateral order. This is critical both because so many governance systems outside of Europe are more fragile and vulnerable and hence in great need, but also because it is not straightforward to voters in the EU that this is a problem in which Europe has both ethical and self-interest-based reasons to (massively) invest in addressing. Yet that interest can be derived from the fact that the EU is intricately connected to many parts of the world. As illustrated above, what happens elsewhere will not stay there, but come to affect Europe through financial, supply chain, political and human connections. Therefore, Germany and the EU have an interest in strengthening

[26] European Parliament, 2024, "Climate change in Europe: facts and figures", <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20180703STO07123/climate-change-in-europe-facts-and-figures>

[27] Wilson Center and adelphi research, 2020, "21st Century Diplomacy. Foreign Policy is Climate Policy", <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/21st-century-diplomacy-foreign-policy-climate-policy-full-report>

adaptation abroad—not only in the narrow sense, but also in terms of building resilience into processes such as global food governance and conflict resolution mechanisms. Moreover, there is an interest-based argument to make even with respect to addressing one of the rather visible injustices that countries and societies in the Global South deplore: supporting resilience building globally is a way to show that an adapting multilateral system from whose functioning Europe has benefitted greatly (as opposed to the raw power politics that has historically been the default alternative) is still in the interest of most.

This concludes the summary of Germany's climate risk assessment. What follows now is a short reflection on how insights from this assessment might contribute to discussions at COP30, opportunities for Brazil as host of the conference to advance the climate, peace and security agenda, and potential entry points for operationalising the agenda at COP30.

A shared agenda: Strengthening cooperation on climate-security gaps at COP30

This paper presented a European perspective, conscious that perspectives from other parts of the world will differ—and that there is a lot of heterogeneity between and within regions along national, political, and sectoral lines on how to address the challenges outlined above. Despite this diversity of viewpoints, climate security requires a concerted international response as climate-related security risks affect every country, either directly or indirectly through interconnected global systems. In fact, aligning climate action with peacebuilding and conflict prevention isn't just a moral imperative; it's a smarter, more strategic approach. Regions where climate risks and human vulnerabilities collide threaten not just local stability but regional and global security. Without targeted interventions, we risk huge losses in human security that simultaneously undermine the fight against both climate change and instability. Fortunately, solutions are within reach. Every dollar invested in climate resilience saves \$16 in crisis response.[28] Given this imperative for a global response, a key question emerges: How could Germany and other countries collaborate in trying to address these shared challenges? An important first step would consist in having a strategic discussion about their perspectives on the interlinkages between the climate crisis and stability risks, and on their respective ideas for addressing these, including those issues where perspectives do not align. Here, the National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment could offer a valuable starting point as it identifies climate security risks likely shared with other countries, while also serving as a blueprint that others can adapt for their own national assessments. As the world gears up for COP30 in Brazil in 2025, there is a unique opportunity to bring peacebuilding and conflict prevention to the forefront of global climate discussions. COP30 offers a timely and appropriate forum for discussion on the climate, peace, and security nexus for two specific reasons.

First, discussions on peace and security are closely interlinked with core UNFCCC themes, such as climate adaptation and sustainable development. Within vulnerable settings, resilience to both climate change and fragility is regularly driven by the same factors such as alternative livelihood options, social safety networks, and institutions for constructively managing and resolving conflicts that result from competition over resources (whether these be natural resources or access to jobs and public services). In such contexts, the Sustainable Development Goals 13 (Climate Action) and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) are thus mutually reinforcing—or, rather, ought to be (made) as mutually reinforcing as possible.

[28] Volz, Ulrich, 2020, Investing in a Green Recovery, *Finance and Development*, International Monetary Fund, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2020/09/pdf/investing-in-a-green-recovery-volz.pdf>

Second, COP30 offers a strategic opportunity to build on the growing momentum around initiatives advancing the climate, peace and security nexus established at previous COPs. Such initiatives include COP27's *Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace* initiative, COP28's *Relief, Recovery and Peace Day*, supported by the *Declaration on Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace*, and COP29's *Peace, Relief and Recovery Day* and the *Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief and Recovery*.

Facing significant climate and environmental risks to human security, Brazil stands to gain from advocating for awareness and solutions to these risks.

Leveraging Brazil's leadership on climate and environmental action for human security

Brazil's leadership in hosting COP30 and advancing global climate and environmental diplomacy presents an opportunity to further progress and shape the climate, peace, and security nexus. The country can demonstrate leadership by championing policies that link climate resilience with conflict prevention through prioritisation of investments in vulnerable regions, fostering of regional cooperation, and ensuring that climate financing reaches those most at risk.

Facing significant climate and environmental risks to human security,[29] Brazil stands to gain from advocating for awareness and solutions to these risks. Its advocacy could extend beyond the national level and extend to tailored solutions for the broader Latin American region, building on institutional precedents like the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) which demonstrates how collaboration can drive climate action while addressing the root causes of instability.

Brazil has long been a champion of multilateralism. As Natalie Samarasinghe and Giovanna Kuele wrote in May 2025, "Brazil under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva stands out for its multilateral ambition [...] from re-engaging with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC, and leading U.N. Security Council efforts on the Israel-Hamas war in 2023, to rebooting the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization, hosting last year's G20 Summit and now chairing BRICS and this year's U.N. COP30 Climate Change Conference".[30] This energy and ambition could also benefit the need for bridging the gap between climate action and peacebuilding.

[29] Munayer, Raquel et al., 2025, "Climate, Environment and Human Security in Brazil: Response Landscape and Leadership Opportunities", Volz, Ulrich, 2020.

[30] Samarasinghe, Natalie and Giovanna Kuele, 2025, "Brazil and Lula Must Back Up Multilateral Ambition With Action", *World Politics Review*, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/brazil-lula-multilateralism>

Entry points for operationalizing the climate, peace and security agenda at COP30

A PEACE DAY AT COP30: BRIDGING CLIMATE AND PEACEBUILDING

A dedicated "Peace Day" at COP30 could serve as a platform to highlight the intersection of climate action, equitable development, and peace. This focus would not only raise awareness but also drive actionable commitments to address the challenges faced by unstable regions.

Such a day could feature high-level dialogues, case studies, and collaborative workshops to explore how climate resilience can foster peace in regions grappling with instability. For instance, discussions could draw on lessons from the Central American Dry Corridor—a region highly vulnerable to climate-related peace and security risks—where climate adaptation projects have reduced tensions,[31] or from the Amazon, where community-led conservation efforts have strengthened social cohesion and reduced vulnerabilities to crime.[32]

By framing peace as a central theme, COP30 could catalyse international support for targeted interventions in unstable contexts, ensuring they receive the attention and resources they urgently need.

A SMARTER APPROACH TO CLIMATE FINANCING

Despite their vulnerability, communities facing instability remain underfunded in global climate action.[33] Instead, most funding flows to middle-income countries with stronger institutions and lower risks. This imbalance is shortsighted. Communities where climate action is most urgently needed—and where it can have the greatest impact—are often those facing risks to their human security and stability. For example, investments in climate-resilient agriculture in Guatemala have reduced food insecurity and strengthened community resilience, helping to break cycles of conflict and displacement. Similarly, renewable energy projects in rural Brazil not only reduce emissions but also create jobs, foster stability, and reduce reliance on illicit economies.

Smarter climate financing doesn't just mean more money—it means better-targeted investments. Funding must be long-term, adaptive, and aligned with local priorities. It must also address the structural drivers of instability, from weak governance to social exclusion. For example, promoting inclusive decision-making in water management or land-use planning can reduce resource-based conflicts and strengthen trust between communities and governments.

[31] Hegazi, Farah and Sandra C. Valencia, 2023, "Lessons on climate resilience and peacebuilding from Ethiopia and the Dry Corridor", <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2023/lessons-climate-resilience-and-peacebuilding-ethiopia-and-dry-corridor>

[32] Avila, Laura and Gabriel Funari, 2025, "Amplifying community-led solutions to combat environmental crimes in the Amazon: ECO-SOLVE community dialogues", <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Laura-Avila-Gabriel-Funari-Amplifying-community-led-solutions-to-combat-environmental-crimes-in-the-Amazon-ECO-SOLVE-community-dialogues-GI-TOC-July-2025.pdf>, p. 9

[33] World Bank, 2024, CLOSING THE GAP. Trends in Adaptation Finance for Fragile and Conflict-affected Settings, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099071924093036614/pdf/P180367-3fd353c3-e8a3-477f-987e-f37c1b5a9457.pdf>

Four principles for climate action in regions affected by instability

To ensure that climate action also benefits the most vulnerable who are exposed to mutually reinforcing climate and conflict risks, we propose four principles that should underpin more ambitious action in fragile contexts:

- 1) **Pivot to Prevention:** Early action saves lives and money. For example, investments in flood early warning systems in Brazil have reduced the need for costly humanitarian interventions during extreme weather events.
- 2) **Operationalise the Nexus:** Climate action must integrate development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian efforts. This calls for climate security risk analyses to become standard operating practices for all climate initiatives.
- 3) **Flexible, Localised Responses:** Diplomacy can enable tailored, context-specific interventions. In the Andes, for instance, partnerships with indigenous communities have strengthened resilience to glacial melting while fostering trust and collaboration.
- 4) **Regional Cooperation:** Instability and climate risks transcend borders. Regional initiatives like ACTO's efforts in the Amazon basin show how collective action can address shared challenges.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding is the missing link in global climate action. Without targeted interventions in unstable regions, the world risks failing its climate goals—and leaving millions behind. The international community must act with urgency and foresight. By aligning climate financing with peacebuilding strategies, integrating foreign policy into climate action, and adopting smarter, multidimensional approaches, we can turn instability from a barrier into an opportunity for progress.

Integrating peacebuilding into climate action is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. The upcoming COP30 presents a critical opportunity to further shape the climate, peace, and security agenda, building on the momentum around this nexus from previous COPs. Discussions on this topic could benefit from insights from Germany's National Interdisciplinary Climate Risk Assessment, serving as an adaptable model for countries developing their own national climate risk assessments.

As the host of COP30, Brazil has a unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership by championing policies that link climate resilience with conflict prevention. The stakes are clear: failure to act will deepen instability and derail global climate goals. The cost of inaction is calculable, and it is far greater than the price of bold, coordinated action today.



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