

Policy BRIEF

SYMPOSIUM EDITION

Climate Change, Migration, and Security in the Horn of Africa

May 24, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Horn of Africa has been facing severe weather patterns, including droughts and floods, which have had devastating impact on the region. These climate challenges have led to significant crop failures, livestock deaths, and conflicts among the population. Approximately, 4.35 million people are now in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and the influx of refugees has further strained the situation. Climate change has also exacerbated a migration crisis, with an estimated 1.4 million individuals expected to migrate from the region in 2023. The region is currently embroiled in conflicts with larger numbers of internally displaced persons. It is also experiencing one of the most severe food insecurity crises globally.

This policy brief is an outcome of a high-level symposium on Climate Change, Migration, and Security in the Horn of Africa, which was jointly organized by the HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) - Regional Programme Security Dialogue for East Africa. The symposium took place on May 24, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together prominent experts and stakeholders from the region. The symposium highlighted the vulnerability of Africa to climate change, the impact of climate change on migration, and the fragility and humanitarian crisis in the Horn region. It also identified the adaptation gap and the limited effectiveness of migration policies and the rule of law. Climate-induced migration has led to increased gender-based violence and inequalities, while threats to food security in Kenya and other countries have increased.

The African Union, IGAD, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have developed various responses and strategies to address the challenges of climate change, migration, and security in the region. However, there is a need for improved collaboration, integration of concerns into national policies, investment in early warning systems,

and promotion of sustainable development practices. The United Nations should facilitate coordination and collaboration to develop a comprehensive global response, including regular dialogues and knowledge sharing.

This policy brief concludes with key recommendations for international and intergovernmental organizations including the United Nations, African Union, IGAD, etc as well as national governments, specialized agencies, faith communities, regional economic communities and other stakeholders to address the complex interplay of climate change, migration, and security in the Horn of Africa. These recommendations include fostering collaboration, integrating concerns into national policies, investing in early warning systems, and advocating for sustainable development practices. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work towards building resilience, promoting sustainable development, and addressing the challenges posed by climate change in the region.

BACKGROUND

The Horn of Africa has over the past decade been grappling with severe weather patterns, including extended periods

Approximately **4.35** million people are now in dire need of humanitarian assistance, and the influx of refugees has further strained the situation

of drought and sporadic heavy rainfall, often resulting in flash floods. The region has been particularly affected since October 2020, with consecutive failed rainy seasons since then, including both the short rains from October to December 2022 and the long rains from March to May in 2021 and 2022, all experiencing below-average rainfall. Despite the rains being experienced in some parts of the region, the consequences of this prolonged drought have been devastating, leading to significant crop failures, deteriorating pasture conditions, livestock deaths, reduced access to surface water, and increased conflicts among the population (World Meteorological Organization, 2022; ReliefWeb, 2023). As a result, approximately 4.35 million people are now in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The situation has been exacerbated by the influx of around 180,000 refugees from Somalia and South Sudan, who have sought shelter in the drought-affected regions of Kenya and Ethiopia (National Drought Management Authority, 2022).

Climate change has exacerbated a migration crisis in the region, leading to an estimated 1.4 million individuals migrating from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti to Yemen and other Gulf countries (Oluoch, 2023). This mass movement is driven by ongoing insecurity, conflicts, unfavourable climate conditions, unemployment, political persecution, and economic downturn. Humanitarian organizations have issued warnings about a significant increase in migration from the Horn of Africa in 2023, potentially matching pre-Covid levels of 1.4 million (Oluoch, 2023).

Currently, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports that over 45,072 migrants are stranded along the Eastern Route between Djibouti and Yemen, with an additional 250,000 in Yemen itself. These figures place immense strain on Yemen's economy and healthcare services. Annually, thousands of migrants undertake the perilous journey from the Horn of Africa along the

Eastern route, crossing the Red Sea through Bossaso in Somalia and Djibouti's coastal town of Obock, before venturing overland to Gulf countries (IOM, 2023). In 2022, the number of migrants entering Djibouti nearly doubled compared to the previous year, while the route claimed the lives of approximately 89 migrants due to hazardous transportation, illness, harsh environmental conditions, drowning at sea, and violence. Sadly, many more deaths and disappearances remain unreported.

Climate change and the resulting migration in the Horn of Africa are also posing significant security risks in the region. The existing conflicts in the area further complicate efforts to predict future scenarios. The Horn of Africa is not only susceptible to conflict and instability but is currently grappling with these issues (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). Countries like Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan are experiencing ongoing conflicts marked by violent clashes between military and militia forces. The region already shelters a staggering number of nearly 2.9 million refugees and asylum seekers, along with over 12 million Internally displaced persons. Moreover, the Horn of Africa is currently facing one of the most severe food insecurity crises worldwide.

By August 2022, the number of people suffering from extreme food insecurity in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia had surged to twenty-two million, with some already enduring famine-like conditions (Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). While efforts are being made to prevent conflicts and crises by recognizing the interconnected risks of climate change and migration, many individuals in the region are already living in a state of insecurity, uncertain about what the future holds.

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KEY FINDINGS

Key Finding 1: Africa's Vulnerability to Climate Change

The Horn of Africa heavily relies on climate-sensitive variables, making it particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change. Prolonged droughts have led to food insecurity, affecting 21 million people in the region. Climate-induced forced migration has further exacerbated the fragile security situation, with the Horn of Africa hosting a high volume of cross-border movement. In 2020 alone, the region hosted 6.5 million Internally displaced persons and 3.5 million refugees and asylum seekers.

The vulnerability of Africa to the impact of climate change was highlighted in the keynote address, which addressed several concerns and challenges. Disappointments were expressed regarding the outcomes of COP27 and the lack of concrete mechanisms to address issues such as animal destruction, forced displacement, and conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Africa. Specific climate-related events in Malawi, Zambia, and DR Congo, including landslides and droughts, as evidence of the continent's vulnerability to climate change were also highlighted. The failure of developed nations to contribute the promised annual \$100 billion since 2015 was mentioned, with particular emphasis on the conditions attached to the available funds.

Key Finding 2: Climate change as one of the primary drivers of migration in the IGAD region

The rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, extreme weather events, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity have pushed communities to migrate in search of better opportunities and adaptive solutions. This highlights the significant impact of climate change on livelihoods, agriculture, and human well-being in the region.

It is also worth noting that the IGAD region experiences frequent climate-related disasters, leading to the displacement of communities. Droughts, floods, and other climate-related events force individuals to leave their homes, resulting in internal displacement. This displacement poses significant challenges for affected populations and places an additional burden on host communities and humanitarian agencies. There is also an alarming rise in flooding, affecting millions of people and displacing a substantial number of individuals in the region.

Key Finding 4: Fragility and humanitarian crises in countries in the Horn region

Many affected communities in the Horn of Africa region are already facing multiple shocks, including political conflicts, climate-related problems such as droughts and floods, and severe economic crises. These factors have made the communities more fragile and vulnerable to humanitarian crises, with collapsed or struggling health systems. This is worsened by funding reductions and a slow response from aid organizations as significant challenges in addressing the humanitarian crisis. The lack of adequate financial resources and delays in response efforts further exacerbate the situation and hinder effective intervention. Additionally, the dire situations caused by climate-related migration and other challenges have intensified protection issues, including high levels of sexual violence primarily affecting girls and women. Moreover, the affected populations are facing not only malnutrition but also outbreaks of measles, cholera, and other vaccine-preventable diseases, straining already stretched health systems.

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Key Finding 5: Climate adaptation gap in the Horn of Africa

The region faces transboundary challenges, particularly with the mobility of pastoral communities. Conflicts arising from resource scarcity and competition have become more frequent, posing significant challenges to effective climate adaptation. It is crucial to develop adaptive strategies and solutions that consider the complex dynamics of these conflicts and the unique needs of the affected communities.

There is a gap in effectively translating climate change information into actionable strategies. While there is a growing body of knowledge on the impact of climate change, it is often not effectively disseminated or utilized to tackle adaptation challenges in the Horn of Africa. Hence, there is a need for improved communication channels and knowledge-sharing platforms to bridge this gap. Developing adaptation reports specific to the region and integrating climate change considerations into development activities would enhance the effectiveness of adaptation efforts.

There is also inadequate alignment of national policies, laws, and strategies with the urgency of climate change adaptation in the Horn of Africa. While there has been an increase in global efforts to address climate change, national frameworks have not kept pace. The existing policies and strategies often focus on incremental changes rather than transformative actions. Additionally, there is a lack of attention and implementation on the ground, further exacerbating the adaptation gap. Financing for climate adaptation, including the 29 funds initiated, remains inadequate to support the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the region.

Key Finding 6: Impact on fragility and conflict amplification

Climate change has exacerbated existing insecurities and worsened the fragility of states in the Horn of Africa region. Failed seasonal rains and other climate-related factors make it difficult for people to meet their basic needs, particularly in terms of agricultural production. This leads to a strain on resources and the need for emergency relief, which diverts attention and resources from climate change mitigation strategies.

On the conflict front, a good example is Somalia which is experiencing a severe drought demonstrates how climate change and conflict mix, leading to food insecurity and increased vulnerability. Disruption of traditional livelihoods and the imposition of levies and taxes by militias exacerbate the situation. The conflict worsens the impact of climate change and hampers relief and humanitarian interventions, resulting in population displacement.

Key Finding 7: Limited effectiveness of migration policies and rule of law

Migration policies implemented in the Horn of Africa region have had limited positive impact in addressing the migration challenges caused by climate change. Despite the attention given to climate change realities by the United Nations and regional bodies, the existing policies, such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework, have not effectively tackled the migration issues arising from climate change in the region.



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Climate-induced migration is not only an environmental concern but also a human rights issue. The right to life, access to water, and the right to health are intertwined with climate-induced migration. There is a need for legal frameworks to recognize and protect the rights of climate migrants, including clear definitions and legal status for climate refugees.

Key Finding 8: Increased gender-based violence, and inequalities during climate-induced migration

Climate-induced migration exposes women and girls to a higher risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Women and girls also face obstacles in accessing essential resources such as land, credit, and technology, which hampers their ability to adapt to climate change. Gender inequalities restrict women's involvement and decision-making power in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, exacerbating their vulnerability.

Climate-induced migration disrupts traditional gender roles, necessitating a reevaluation of gender norms and identities. In addition, the displacement caused by climate change can break social networks and support systems, negatively affecting the social cohesion and well-being of women and girls. This highlights the importance of addressing social norms and roles to promote women's empowerment and support their adaptability in new environments.

Key Finding 9: Increased threats to food security in Kenya

Climate change poses a significant threat to food security in Africa, including Kenya, jeopardizing decades of progress in improving access to safe and nutritious food. The overlapping crises, such as extreme weather events and environmental destruction, hinder agricultural productivity, increase reliance on food imports, and disrupt food systems. An urgent and transformative action is required to address the challenges posed by climate change and ensure resilient and sustainable food systems. It calls for coordinated efforts involving governments, development partners, the private sector, and civil society. This includes implementing strategies, policy reforms, and investment plans that leverage modern science, technologies, and innovations to build resilience and mitigate the impact of climate change on food security.

Key Finding 10: African Union responses to climate change shocks

The African Union has developed various responses and strategies to address the challenges of climate change, migration, and security in the region. These include the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy, the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, peace and security council sessions on climate change and conflict, regional studies in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, green recovery action plans, early warning systems, urban resilience programs, capacity building programs, and involvement in initiatives like the Great Green Wall. These efforts aim to enhance resilience, promote sustainable development, and foster regional cooperation.

Key Finding 11: Intergovernmental Authority on Development responses to climate change shocks

IGAD's response to climate change involves various interventions and strategies. In the first phase of their regional strategy, IGAD focuses on areas such as food and nutrition security, improving land governance, and implementing initiatives like the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI) and the IGAD Regional Climate Change Strategy (IRCCS). They emphasize cooperation and action on issues including desertification, land degradation, extreme weather events, migration, and the need for data and financing. IGAD also addresses pastoralist communities through the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance, aiming to enhance their support and

security. Additionally, IGAD recognizes the threats to peace and security posed by climate change and calls for targeted financing and collaboration to establish a Climate Security Coordination Mechanism. Efforts are being made to improve coordination on climate, peace, and security within IGAD and prioritize famine prevention and resilience-building.

Key Finding 12: United Nations Environmental Programme's responses to climate change shocks

United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has responded to climate change, migration, and security challenges through the establishment of the Climate Security Mechanism (CSM). They have launched initiatives, provided support to analysis and action, and fostered partnerships and collaborations. Efforts have been made to develop a common regional position and enhance coordination on climate, peace, and security. Capacity building programs have been implemented, and a regional Climate Security Coordination Mechanism for the Horn of Africa has been proposed. However, the report highlights the need for increased access to finance and capacity building to effectively address climate-related risks in the region.

Key Finding 13: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' responses to climate change shocks

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) implements a comprehensive approach to address the challenges of climate change. FAO recognizes the impact of climate change on food security and promotes climate-smart agriculture to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience. They strengthen early warning systems to prepare vulnerable communities for climate-related disasters that often lead to migration. FAO also focuses on sustainable land and water management to mitigate climate change impact and reduce land degradation that can cause conflicts and forced migration. They promote rural development and economic opportunities to address the root causes of migration and engage in partnerships and international cooperation to enhance their interventions. These efforts aim to achieve sustainable and secure food systems in the face of global challenges.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The African Union:

- Foster collaboration among African Union member states to develop a unified approach in addressing climate change, migration, and security challenges. This can include the establishment of regional platforms, joint initiatives, and resource-sharing mechanisms.
- Encourage member states to integrate climate change, migration, and security concerns into national policies and development plans. Promote the adoption of regional frameworks that address the interconnections between these issues and provide guidance for coordinated action.
- Invest in the development and enhancement of regional early warning systems to anticipate and respond to climate-related disasters, which can lead to forced displacement and security threats. Ensure that these systems are accessible to all member states and incorporate local knowledge and expertise.
- Advocate for sustainable development practices that prioritize climate resilience, inclusive growth, and equitable resource distribution. Support initiatives that promote renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and the conservation of natural resources.

The United Nations:

- Facilitate coordination and collaboration among member states, regional organizations, and relevant agencies to develop a comprehensive global response to climate change, migration, and security challenges. This can be achieved through regular dialogues, knowledge sharing, and joint initiatives.
- Provide technical and financial assistance to countries, particularly in the IGAD region, to enhance their capacity in addressing climate change impact, managing migration flows, and ensuring the security of affected populations. This can include funding for adaptation projects, knowledge transfer, and the establishment of regional training centers.
- Advocate for the development and implementation of international legal frameworks that address the rights and protection of climate-induced migrants, promote their access to basic services, and ensure their human security. This can include working towards the adoption of a legally binding global agreement on climate-induced migration.
- Encourage the collection of accurate and comprehensive data on climate change, migration, and security to better understand the dynamics and develop evidence-based policies and strategies. Support research initiatives that explore the socio-economic, political, and environmental implications of climate-related migration.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD):

Strengthen cooperation among IGAD member states to address the challenges of climate change, migration, and security in the Horn of Africa. Facilitate regular exchanges, joint initiatives, and the sharing of best practices to build resilience and promote regional stability.

Religious/faith leaders:

Champion climate change issues and thus the push for the establishment of the African Faith-based Network for Climate Justice (AFAN) as a platform to address climate change issues. Religion should not remain silent when it comes to containing climate change, particularly in light of the devastating drought in the Horn region.

Regional governments:

- Foster regional cooperation and effectively address climate-induced migration. Initiatives such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration; African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa; Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Climate Change and Environment; and IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons are important steps towards developing comprehensive frameworks and addressing the intersection of migration, climate change, and the environment in the region.
- Forestall and mitigate food security shocks and prepare for various mega trends that will shape the continent's food systems. These include rapid population growth, land scarcity, rising land prices, increasing demand for food due to urbanization and rising incomes, global health crises, economic disruptions, civil conflicts, and more frequent and intense weather disruptions associated with climate change.

FAO:

Encourage quick uptake of climate-smart practices in agriculture to enhance adaptive capacities and resilience among farmers in the Horn of Africa region. By adopting climate-smart agriculture, farmers can better adapt to the changing climatic conditions while simultaneously contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This approach encourages the efficient use of natural resources, such as water and soil, and promotes sustainable land and water management practices.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs):

Advocate for increased financing and capacity building. Access to finance is crucial for implementing climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as for addressing climate-related peace and security risks. Adequate funding can support initiatives such as building climate-resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable land and water management practices, enhancing early warning systems, and supporting livelihood diversification in vulnerable communities. These measures can contribute to reducing the vulnerability of communities to climate impact, minimizing conflict over scarce resources, and fostering stability and security in the region.

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📍 Durham Road • Kileleshwa, Nairobi

☎ +254 720 323 896/735 323 896 @ info@horninstitute.org
f @HISS2017 @Horninstitute www.horninstitute.org



📍 Plot 24 Hill Lane Kololo • Kampala, Uganda

✉ sipodi.east@kas.de | www.kas.de/sipodi-east