IOM VISION AND PROGRAMMING

Building on IOM's leading role as the UN Migration Agency and its Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021-2023, IOM understands the links between migration, environment, and climate change through the wide lens of human security and is committed to putting vulnerable people at the center of its responses. As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Article 6 of the New Agenda for Peace and Action Agenda on Internal Displacement recall, adopting a human security approach is crucial to achieving sustainable development and solutions, building resilience and promoting human rights. Furthermore, IOM's approach to interlinkages between the climate and insecurity is rooted in the UN sustaining peace agenda, pioneered in the 2016 twin resolutions (UN General Assembly and Security Council). The sustaining peace approach emphasizes the importance of inclusivity as a key component to prevent lapse and relapse into conflict. IOM commits to further advancing the role that integrated human mobility solutions can play in addressing climate, security and peace issues.

The climate, peace and security nexus is the lens that enables IOM to develop tailored analyses, response strategies, and programmes to the compounded challenges presented by the climate crisis on conflict-affected populations. In fragile and conflict contexts affected by climate change, IOM's efforts to sustain peace blend conflict mitigation and resolution interventions. These efforts aim to build more inclusive governance systems while simultaneously providing governments and host communities with services, data and analyses to act early and better manage human mobility flows. Efforts also seek to better manage natural resources and land, enhance urban planning and conflict prevention, as well as adaptive technologies, trainings and agriculture and natural resource infrastructure to adapt their livelihoods. IOM programming on climate security expands from policy multilateral frameworks, free movement protocols, humanitarian visas, planned relocation guidelines to national and local adaptation plans, conflict prevention, community stabilization and environmental peacebuilding.

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HUMAN MOBILITY, PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION
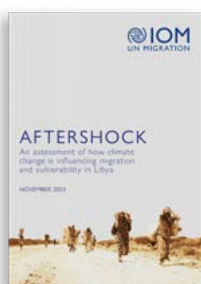
Climate security refers to the direct and indirect impacts of the climate crisis on peace and security, where climate change acts as a threat multiplier, exacerbating underlying vulnerabilities and compounding existing grievances. The consequences of climate change affect all areas of human security (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political) and undermine conflict prevention, sustaining peace and sustainable development efforts with a disproportionate impact on communities with existing vulnerabilities, including migrants, women and girls, children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples. Global warming, environmental changes, and variations in weather patterns are placing added stress on governments already unable to meet national development needs, deepening socio-economic fragility, and a sense of marginalization and exclusion, thereby increasing political grievances. In fragile and conflict-affected states, these dynamics exacerbate tensions, particularly when national and local policies fail to address the causes of existing tension and to implement local mediation and dispute resolution mechanisms with the most vulnerable and marginalized groups for whom natural resources are depleted and traditional livelihoods progressively destroyed.

Evidence and data highlight that the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation are reshaping human mobility patterns that can take the form of internal and regional migration, on a temporary, circular or longer-term basis, by individuals, households and communities, moving voluntarily or forcibly displaced, as well as planned relocations supported by States or "trapped populations" for those unable to move. The consequences of climate change and environmental degradation are also transforming traditionally symbiotic relationships between seasonal migrants, such as herders and sedentary groups, such as farmers and fishers, into antagonistic relationships marked by violence. Today, people are already moving and most of the climate-related human mobility is currently taking place within countries. Large-scale rural-to-urban movements are driving rapid growth of the world's cities, often fueled by the detrimental impact of the changing climate on rural livelihoods. As a result, tensions may rise in transit and destination settings by putting an additional burden on natural resources and available services and increasing competition over resources. Lack of access to services, sustainable employment and social protection in cities may exacerbate tensions in urban areas. A lack of livelihood options has been identified as a factor driving the youth to join criminal and armed groups. The prevalence of armed groups in areas affected by climate hazards or destination areas of climate mobility should, therefore, be considered when addressing the conflict, security and peace nexus.

In addition to the importance of supporting governments to limit carbon emissions, the human mobility policy landscape is another area that requires elevated focus to support solutions for people and communities impacted by the interplay between the consequences of climate change and insecurity. Depending on the human security context, moving out of harm's way can either lead to unprepared and protracted displacement with increased humanitarian needs or, on the contrary, be an adaptation strategy to cope with the effects of climate change in a regular, safe, informed and voluntary manner. These situations call for longer-term development, peacebuilding and conflict prevention, adaptation and disaster risk reduction policies and context-specific practices that strengthen the resilience of migrants, displaced people and hosted communities to ensure durable solutions.
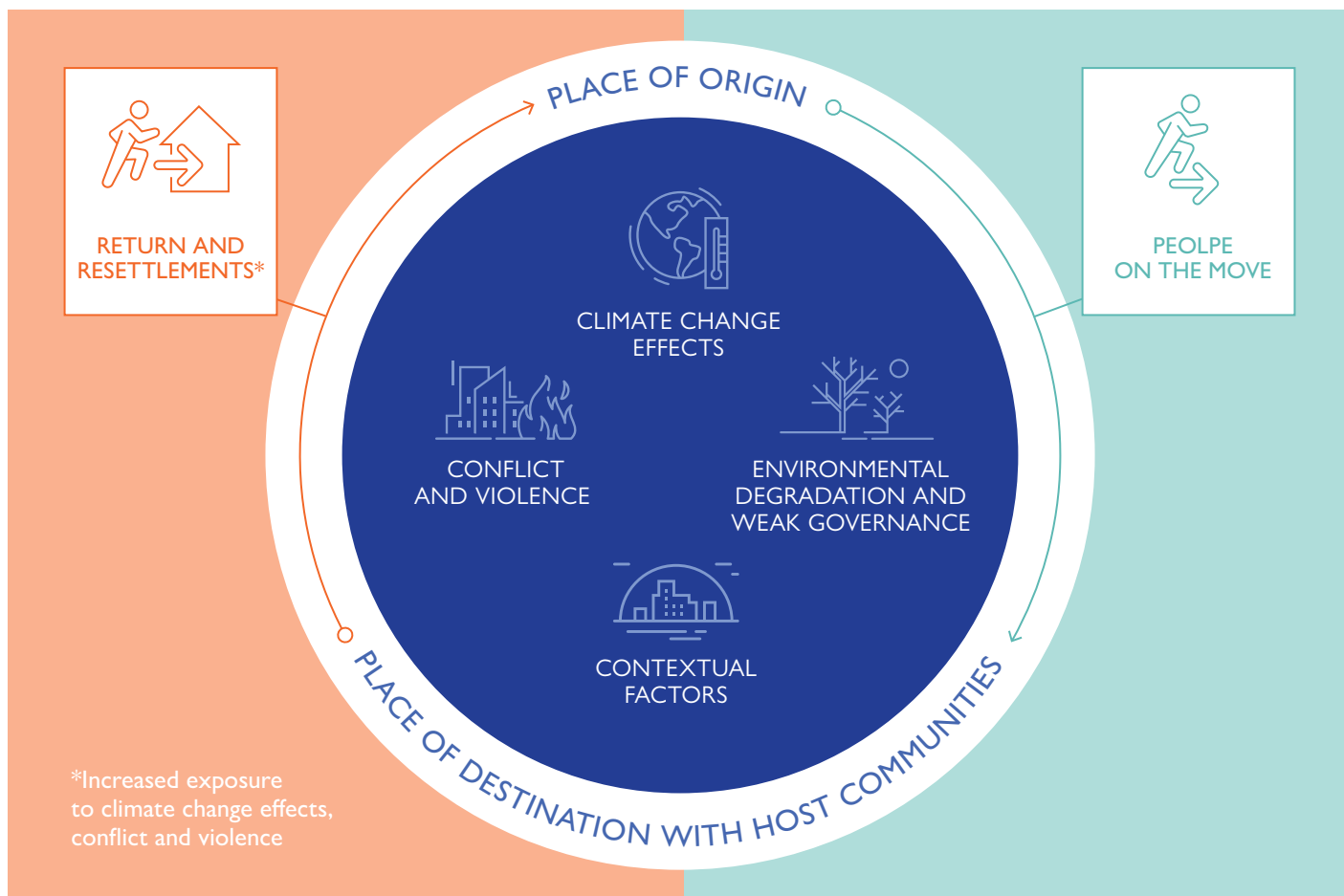
PUBLICATIONS

AFTERSHOCK: AN ASSESSMENT OF HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS INFLUENCING MIGRATION AND VULNERABILITY IN LIBYA (IOM, 2023)

In November 2023, IOM DTM found that 25% of migrants interviewed in Libya had experienced at least one climatic shock or stressor in the year prior to migrating to Libya, and 56% estimated that this shock had had a severe impact on their wellbeing (food consumption and income levels). Migrants who had endured a climatic shock in the year prior to migrating to Libya had a higher level of debt and fared worse in Libya; more of them faced financial difficulties, safety issues, food insecurity, a lack of clean drinking water and had limited or no access to healthcare. Link

DRIVERS OF CLIMATE-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT: CLIMATE VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT IN IRAQ (IOM, 2023)

Climate change and environmental degradation have contributed to the displacement of at least 55,290 individuals in assessed locations in central and southern Iraq between January 2016 and October 2022. This figure represents an estimated 15% of the original population that used to reside in these locations. In other words, more than 1 in 10 people from these locations have been displaced in the past six years. Given the uptick in environmental migration observed in 2022, this trend is expected to worsen, particularly in the absence of adequate mitigation and adaptation strategies. Link

CASE STUDY

BREAKING THE CLIMATE-CONFLICT CYCLE, SOMALIA

In Somalia, competition over access to land and water is the structural driver of most violent conflict. Climate change and environmental degradation further reduce scarce water resources, forcing communities to move and confront one another for control over diminishing ecological yields. Through multi-sectoral and cross-expertise collaboration, IOM, UNEP and SIPRI are implementing and advancing policy to reduce climate change-related displacement and conflict in target locations in Somalia through tangible investments and pragmatic innovations for water and energy capture in the agropastoral sector, bolstered by sustained dialogue and enhanced natural resource management.

Communities have improved ability to identify, develop, and reinforce inclusive, climate-sensitive, and natural resource management structures and dispute resolution mechanisms that inhibit the escalation of climate-induced violence. Activities included mobility tracking assessments, the establishment of a Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT), the design and construction or rehabilitation of ecologically viable ground- and surface water systems with the establishment of a Water User Committee, and capacity-building workshops to promote rural resilience and strengthen environmentally informed dispute resolution.

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IOM UN MIGRATION

IOM Environmental Migration Portal:
www.environmentalmigration.iom.int

Contact Information: DRR_CCA-PCCA@iom.int
TRDHQ@iom.int

MAY 2024 | 3