

Climate, Peace and Security Thematic Fact Sheet

Women, Peace and Security

Climate-related security risks are not gender-neutral; they intersect with existing social, political and economic inequalities, shaping people's exposure to risk, capacity to adapt and inclusion in peacebuilding. Gender inequalities, such as limited access to financial resources and exclusion from decision making, undermine the ability of women and marginalized groups to respond to climate change and contribute to sustainable peace. To address climate-related security risks effectively, gender considerations must be integrated into analysis, planning and implementation.

- Social norms and gender roles constrain the adaptive capacity of women and sexual and gender minorities. Discriminatory laws, unpaid care burdens and exclusion from leadership limit access to resources and reduce resilience.
- Climate stressors and shocks deepen gender inequalities by increasing food insecurity, displacement and gender-based violence, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected areas, although impacts are highly context specific.
- Women are disproportionately affected but they are also leading climate adaptation and peacebuilding. Across regions, women innovate locally grounded solutions that sustain livelihoods, manage natural resources and foster social cohesion. Unlocking their full potential requires dismantling structural barriers to participation.
- Amplifying and investing in women-led initiatives, including through both the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda and the climate, peace and security (CPS) agenda, is essential to strengthening community resilience and advancing sustainable peace.

Advancing gender-responsive climate, peace and security measures requires broad participation and commitment. This includes empowering underrepresented groups and engaging those with social and political power to advance the CPS and WPS agendas and foster inclusive governance. Several United Nations resolutions and initiatives already recognize these links, for example, the mandate of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to develop gender-differentiated climate risk assessments and the UN Peacebuilding Fund's increasing support for women-led initiatives addressing climate and conflict. However, gender remains inconsistently addressed in climate policies, while climate risks are largely absent from WPS frameworks, highlighting the need for more coordinated, intersectional approaches across both agendas.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- ▶ United Nations agencies, multilateral donors and national governments should provide sustained financial, technical and institutional support to grassroots women's groups and local peacebuilders. Funding mechanisms such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund and the Green Climate Fund should expand dedicated windows for gender-responsive, locally led climate adaptation and peacebuilding, particularly to advance women, peace and security (WPS) priorities for women's participation, relief and recovery in climate and conflict-affected contexts.
- ▶ The UN system should strengthen protection for displaced women, men, girls and boys at risk of gender-based violence, forced recruitment, labour exploitation and other gendered threats. To foster policy coherence, it should support governments in identifying synergies between WPS national action plans and climate instruments such as national adaptation plans. This includes establishing coordination mechanisms across ministries and institutions to align gender-responsive climate action in their agendas and policy frameworks.
- ▶ UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions, UN country teams and national governments should further engage local women mediators, environmental defenders, Indigenous leaders and local communities in climate-related conflict prevention, crisis response and peacebuilding. Gender and climate expertise should guide these efforts to ensure that peace processes in climate-affected contexts are gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive to avoid unintended harm.
- ▶ UN member states and regional organizations should embed climate change as a cross-cutting theme in WPS national action plans and ensure that gender is systematically addressed in climate, peace and security policies and climate strategies. This includes strengthening thematic actions on food security, energy access and disaster risk reduction. Also, strengthening attention to men's and boys' gendered experiences, accelerating measures to advance women's leadership and meaningfully integrating Indigenous knowledge into climate action and peacebuilding strategies.

Figure 1. Key statistics

Gender inequalities



Food insecurity impacts 26.7 per cent of women and 25.4 per cent of men



In 2023, 4 out of 10 recorded civilian deaths were women, 3 out of 10 were children, and 3 out of 10 were men



By 2050, climate change is projected to push 158 million more women and girls and 142 million men and boys into poverty



Over 75 per cent of agricultural policies recognize women's roles, but only 19 per cent treat gender equality or women's rights as explicit policy objectives

Women's participation

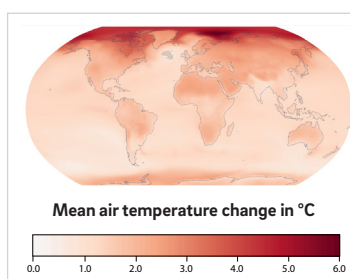
Between 1989 and 2018 in Africa and the Americas, women's groups participated in 9 per cent of all formal peace negotiations

Between 1989 and 2018 in Africa and the Americas, women's groups participated in 12 per cent of all non-violent actions pushing for peace processes

At COP29 in 2024, women represented only 35 per cent of delegates

Between 2015 and 2023 in the UN Security Council, only 22 per cent of member states' permanent representatives were women

Climate projection, 2039



Note: Climate change projections are based on the Sixth Phase of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP6) and the Shared Socioeconomic Pathway (SSP) 1–2.6.

Sources: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 'IPCC WGI Interactive Atlas', accessed 7 Sep. 2025; Nilsson, D. and Svensson, I., 'Pushing the doors open: Nonviolent action and inclusion in peace negotiations', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 60, no. 1 (Feb. 2023); United Nations, Security Council, 'Protection of civilians in armed conflict', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/385, 14 May 2024; UN Women and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024* (UN Women: 2024); and Gender Climate Tracker, 'Women's participation on party delegations', accessed 7 Sep. 2024.

The CPS and WPS agendas

The CPS and WPS agendas are distinct but have overlapping frameworks. The WPS agenda is the global framework recognizing the vital role women play in conflict prevention, peacebuilding and recovery, and highlighting the connection between a gender-equal world, community resilience and positive peace.¹ The CPS agenda focuses on how climate change interconnects with conflict and security, and the potential for climate-informed peacebuilding. As climate change and conflict amplify existing inequalities, increase insecurity and complicate recovery and peacebuilding, the two agendas can converge to offer integrated solutions.²

The WPS agenda acknowledges climate change as a factor shaping peace and security, allowing for its integration through national action plans.³ Its four pillars provide an entry point for climate action.⁴ Participation can ensure women's and marginalized groups' knowledge and leadership in climate action and peacebuilding are supported. Protection can strengthen legal frameworks, safeguarding women environmental defenders and peacebuilders, as women are on the frontlines and face disproportionate risks of violence and criminalization. Prevention offers opportunities to anticipate and reduce climate-related security risks by addressing structural inequalities and promoting adaptive capacity. Relief and recovery can ensure post-conflict and post-disaster responses are gender-responsive and climate-smart, thus building resilience.

References to women, men, boys and girls continue to be added into frameworks without deeper analysis of the different groups' roles, vulnerabilities or privileges. Sexual and gender minorities also remain largely invisible in data and policy, despite facing disproportionate risks due to discrimination and exclusion.⁵

To effectively address peace and security challenges, UN member states and regional organizations should embed climate considerations as a cross-cutting theme across all the pillars in WPS national action plans, while ensuring gender is systematically integrated into CPS frameworks. Greater attention needs to be given to the two less utilized WPS pillars, prevention and relief and recovery, with a focus on sectors such as food security, energy and disaster risk reduction. By integrating women's leadership into climate action, climate, peace and security governance can move beyond short-term responses towards sustainable peace.

Climate-related peace and security risks

Climate change is rarely the main driver of conflict, but it can undermine development gains, exacerbate the dynamics of ongoing violence, amplify existing tensions and disrupt fragile peace processes. Violent conflict and political instability can also weaken community resilience to the effects of climate change. This fact sheet uses four interrelated pathways to navigate the relationship between climate change, peace and security: (a) livelihood impacts, (b) migration and mobility, (c) armed actors and security, and (d) political and economic grievances.⁶ Integrating the WPS agenda into climate, peace and security analysis helps identify both gendered vulnerabilities and capacities that are often overlooked in the different pathways.

Livelihood impacts

Livelihoods dependent on natural resources are especially vulnerable to climate change. In many conflict-affected settings, a large share of the population relies on rain-fed agriculture, pastoralism and fishing. These sectors are highly exposed to climate hazards such as heatwaves, floods, droughts and deforestation. For vulnerable households and communities with limited livelihood options, climate hazards worsen existing challenges, often disrupting livelihoods and driving climate-induced migration.⁷

Women are often responsible for collecting water, firewood and other resources, which are tasks that in conflict-affected settings can expose them to greater risks of sexual and gender-based violence.⁸ Delays at overcrowded water points can lead to punishment and domestic violence, while long distances increase exposure to attacks.⁹ Resource scarcity has also contributed to school dropout rates among girls. In Sri Lanka and Mozambique, this has included early marriage as a survival strategy during prolonged conflict and climate stress, further reinforcing gender inequalities.¹⁰

Many small-scale farmers in low- and middle-income countries are women, who are responsible for household food security but face barriers such as limited land rights, decision-making power and access to technology, education and training.¹¹ These inequalities not only restrict their participation in climate action, but risk sidelining their valuable knowledge of local ecosystems and adaptation strategies. Nevertheless, women are already key to advancing climate adaptation. In Chad, women make up 60 per cent of the agricultural workforce and have sustained food production despite land degradation and water scarcity. Their leadership in adapting farming techniques and managing resources has been vital in climate and conflict-affected areas.¹²

Greater investment in women-led adaptation and resilience initiatives is needed, alongside consistent financial, technical and institutional support to grassroots women's groups and local peacebuilders. The participation and relief and recovery pillars of the WPS agenda are particularly relevant here. Increasing women's representation in decision making strengthens resilience and often improves social cohesion outcomes. The relief and recovery pillar can be directly applied to reconstruction following climate-related security risks.

Migration and mobility

Gender provides a framework for considering the implications of climate-induced migration.¹³ Climate-induced migration and mobility can be influenced by socially constructed gender roles, in which men are expected to migrate for new opportunities and women to stay behind to fulfil household and childcare duties.¹⁴ This has been the case for communities in countries such as Bangladesh, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Mali and Nepal.¹⁵ For the men who migrate, the journeys to find better economic opportunities, and the jobs themselves, can be dangerous and exploitative; and they can be separated from their families for years.¹⁶ For the women who stay, this often entails assuming new roles as the heads of households, challenging oppressive gender relations and emerging as stakeholders in resource management. At the same time, traditional gender norms are often enforced by male relatives or other community members, including restricted mobility.¹⁷

¹ Baldwin, G. and Berteau, M., 'Where next for the women, peace and security agenda?', SIPRI WritePeace Blog, 1 Oct. 2024.

² Cohn, C. and Duncanson, C., 'Women, peace and security in a changing climate', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 22, no. 5 (Oct. 2020).

³ UN Security Council Resolution 2242, 13 Oct. 2015.

⁴ The four pillars are: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery.

⁵ Coomaraswamy, R., *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council 1325 on Women, Peace and Security* (UN Women: 2015).

⁶ Möbjörk, M., Krampe, F. and Tarif, K., 'Pathways of climate insecurity: Guidance for policymakers', SIPRI Policy Brief, Nov. 2020.

⁷ Tarif, K. et al., 'Climate, Peace and Security Research Paper: Insights on Climate, Peace and Security', NUPI and SIPRI, Dec. 2023.

⁸ Castañeda Camey, I. et al., *Gender-based Violence and Environment Linkages* (IUCN: Gland, 2020).

⁹ Yoshida, K. et al., *Defending the Future: Gender, Conflict and Environmental Peace* (LSE/GAPS/WIPC: 2021).

¹⁰ Pope, D. H. et al., 'What is the current evidence for the relationship between the climate and environmental crises and child marriage? A scoping review', *Global Public*

Health, vol. 18, no. 1 (2023).

¹¹ Canas, F. and de Haan, N., 'Investing in women is the key to resilient food systems', CGIAR Blog, 7 Mar. 2025.

¹² Bociaga, R., 'Resilient women farmers in Chad battle climate challenges and social barriers', Mongabay, 29 Aug. 2024.

¹³ Detraz, N. and Windsor, L., 'Evaluating climate migration: Population movement, insecurity and gender', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 16, no. 1 (2014).

¹⁴ Majidi, N., Pfister, L. and Falsini, S., 'Leading the way: Women navigating climate change, mobility and resilience in Africa: Case studies from Somalia, Kenya and Nigeria', Working paper, Samuel Hall and UNDP, 2025.

¹⁵ CARE Climate Change and Resilience Platform (CCRP), *Evicted by Climate Change: Confronting the Gendered Impacts of Climate-Induced Displacement* (CARE: The Hague, 2020).

¹⁶ Braham, M., 'Gender and climate-induced migration in the Mediterranean: From resilience to peace and human security', *Mediterra 2018: Migration and Inclusive Rural Development in the Mediterranean* (Presses de Sciences Po: 2018).

¹⁷ Majidi, N., Pfister, L. and Falsini, S. et al., 'Climate migration amplifies gender inequalities', DIIS Policy Brief, 19 Aug. 2024; and Serraglio, D. A. and Thornton, F., 'Women on the move? Mainstreaming gender policies and legal

In Somalia and Kenya, women reported that handling the heavy workload of old and new responsibilities without spousal support often comes with considerable psychological stress and a decline in overall wellbeing.¹⁸ Women's lack of access to education, information, decision making and resources, as well as restricted mobility, further heightens their vulnerability to climate-related security risks and negatively affects their adaptive capacity.¹⁹

Disasters can also drive displacement, which in turn heightens people's vulnerability to climate-related security risks. Climate- and conflict-induced displacement can increase the competition for resources and heighten the risk of conflict between host communities and internally displaced persons.²⁰ Moreover, climate-related displacement increases the risk of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence against women, as it often disrupts social structures and limits access to essential services, leaving women more exposed to violence. This is particularly the case for women who are forced to live in emergency shelters and displacement camps, where access to information, recovery services and support is often very limited or completely absent.²¹ For example, internally displaced women in Somalia have reported that they live in constant fear of rape and sexual violence, and that the absence of both formal and informal judicial and social structures undermines their protection.²²

Specialized UN agencies and humanitarian organizations should pay greater attention to specific gendered vulnerabilities created or exacerbated by climate-related migration and displacement. This includes strengthening protection for women-headed households and displaced women and girls, while also addressing risks faced by men and boys. The UN system should further support governments in developing and strengthening legal and policy frameworks and instruments that address the interlinkages between climate-induced migration and displacement and gender.²³

Armed actors and security

The environmental impacts of climate change and related livelihood losses can exacerbate sociopolitical and economic vulnerabilities and aggravate conflict dynamics, increasing the risk of recruitment by armed groups.²⁴ In Cameroon, Chad, Niger and north-eastern Nigeria former members of armed groups have cited climate change impacts as a contributing factor in their recruitment.²⁵ In the absence of a state presence, armed groups gain legitimacy in local communities by positioning themselves as alternative service providers and first responders during disasters, and as dispute mediators.²⁶

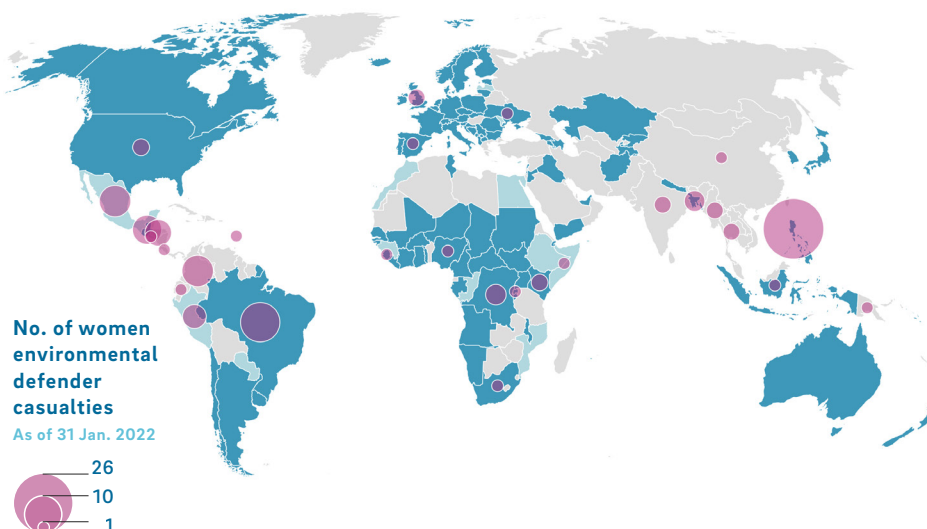
Gendered expectations influence these dynamics. Societal norms that position men as breadwinners and protectors can pressure them

Figure 2. Global overview of national action plans and women environmental defender casualties

Women, peace and security (WPS) national action plans (NAPs)

2025

■ No NAP ■ NAP published ■ NAP published referencing climate change



Note: Women environmental defender casualties also include missing bodies.

Sources: University of Sydney, 'WPS national action plans', accessed 20 Aug. 2025; and Tran, D. and Hanacek, K., 'A global analysis of violence against women defenders in environmental conflicts', *Nature Sustainability*, vol. 6, no. 9 (Sep. 2023).

to join armed groups in cases of conflict, climate-related shocks or lack of alternative livelihoods. In Uganda's Karamoja region, men's cultural identities are tied to cattle ownership and food provision, but prolonged drought, crop failure and livestock losses have led some men to engage in cattle raiding and theft, which contributes to insecurity.²⁷ In Myanmar, men, women and sexual and gender minorities have joined armed groups both voluntarily and under coercion, and in Sierra Leone climate variability has been linked to a rise in the recruitment of children, especially girls, who are often targeted because they are perceived to require fewer resources.²⁸

Military deployment in climate adaptation and disaster response can pose security risks. In Colombia, security personnel assigned to clean energy projects have reportedly threatened women environmental defenders, including with sexual violence. Military involvement in combating environmental crimes has led to the criminalization of Indigenous, Afro-descendant and peasant small-scale subsistence practices, while large-scale environmental crimes by other actors have gone unpunished. Moreover, military-led disaster responses typically do not improve civilian safety and may divert resources away from government services and civil society.²⁹

Globally, environmental rights defenders are targeted by both state and non-state actors, and often criminalized, threatened or killed.³⁰ Such threats are exacerbated in contexts of armed conflict. Despite the risks, women continue to play critical roles in peacebuilding. As grassroots mediators, they engage diverse voices such as youth, minorities and civil society, and work towards trust building in communities and among conflict parties.³¹ In Yemen's war-affected

frameworks addressing climate-induced migration', *Comparative Migration Studies*, vol. 12, no. 53 (2024).

¹⁸ Majidi, Pfister and Falsini (note 14).

¹⁹ CARE CCRP (note 15); and International Organization for Migration (IOM), 'Gender, migration and climate change', accessed 1 July 2025.

²⁰ Burson, B., *Displacement in a Changing Climate* (IFRC: Geneva, 2021).

²¹ CARE CCRP (note 15).

²² Nicolle, H., *Identifying Climate Adaptive Solutions to Displacement in Somalia*, IOM and UNEP Assessment Report (Samuel Hall: Feb. 2021).

²³ UN Women, *Integrating Climate Change into National Action Plans for Women, Peace and Security*. In Focus: Asia and the Pacific, Guidance Note (UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: 2025); and Serraglio and Thornton (note 17).

²⁴ Tariff et al. (note 7); UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), 'Climate change is driving people into armed groups: Five takeaways', July 2024; and Bertrand, B. and Koko, A. D., *Climate Change and Armed Groups*, UNDP Report (SeeD: Nicosia, 2023).

²⁵ UNIDIR (note 24).

²⁶ Tariff et al. (note 7).

²⁷ Dwyer, A. and Nuckhir, G., *Gender, Cultural Identity, Conflict and Climate Change: Understanding the Relationships* (Conciliation Resources: London, Sep. 2023).

²⁸ Bakaki, Z. and van der Haer, R., 'The impact of climate variability on children: The recruitment of boys and girls by rebel groups', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 60, no. 4 (Aug. 2022); and UN Human Rights Council, 'Courage amid crisis: Gendered impacts of the coup and the pursuit of gender equality in Myanmar', A/HRC/56/CRP.8, 1 July 2024.

²⁹ DCAF, *Women Speak: The Lived Nexus Between Climate, Gender and Security* (DCAF: Geneva, 2022); and Hynes, T. and Yadav, P., 'Dissolving interagency siloes: The WPS agenda on the disaster-conflict continuum', *Global Observatory*, 15 Oct. 2020.

³⁰ Front Line Defenders, *Global Analysis 2024/25* (Front Line Defenders: Dublin/Brussels, July 2025); and Schleiter Nielsen, A., 'Where environmental defenders are criminalized, democracy suffers', *International IDEA*, 30 Nov. 2023.

³¹ Al-Saidi, K. et al., 'Climate change, conflict and gender: Insights and perspectives

regions of Taiz and Lahj, women facilitated dialogue committees with tribal leaders, community figures and legal experts to negotiate civilian access to water tanks with military actors, improving local resource access and reducing tensions.³² Yet women mediators face barriers such as lack of resources, exclusion from policy spaces and restrictive sociocultural norms.³³

The meaningful participation of women mediators, environmental defenders, Indigenous groups and local communities in climate-related conflict prevention and resolution is essential for inclusive, lasting peace. This reflects the prevention and participation pillars of WPS resolutions and supports the CPS goal of addressing resource-based conflict drivers through inclusive dialogue. As WPS national action plans are often developed through broad networks, including governments, civil society, regional bodies and security actors, they offer a key entry point for aligning with the CPS agenda. Climate policies and peace processes should be gender-responsive and conflict-sensitive to avoid unintended harm, including the securitization of climate governance. Peacebuilding programmes, including national peacebuilding and development plans, should address the nexus between climate change and gender to better foster resilience and reduce insecurity.

Political and economic grievances

In many of the countries most affected by climate change, national climate policies still inadequately address gender perspectives. Although the vast majority of climate change national adaptation plans submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change as of June 2024 referenced gender, these references are often superficial or disconnected from implementation.³⁴ Consequently, adaptation and mitigation efforts frequently fall short of addressing and responding to gendered needs, and, in the worst case, they reinforce structural inequalities and fuel political and economic grievances.³⁵

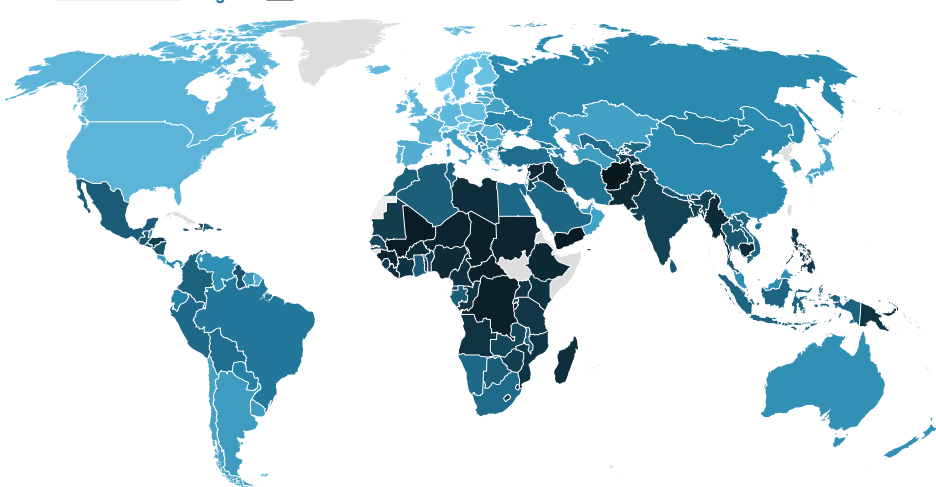
Several African and Caribbean countries have cited specific challenges and barriers in implementing gender-responsive climate adaptation programmes, including a lack of disaggregated data, limited analytical capability, low capacity to mainstream gender into climate policies and weak institutional coordination between climate and gender sectors.³⁶ These gaps reduce the legitimacy, effectiveness and equity of climate policies and can deepen mistrust between governments and marginalized communities. When people feel excluded from

Figure 3. Global overview of insecurity, climate vulnerability and gender inequality

Insecurity, climate vulnerability and gender inequality score

As of 2022

Low High No data



Note: The score was calculated using three key indexes. The Fragile States Index is based on a conflict assessment framework using 12 cohesion, economic, political and social conflict risk indicators. The ND-GAIN Country Index covers 2 key dimensions of climate change adaptation: vulnerability to climate change and readiness to adapt. The Women, Peace and Security Index scores and ranks countries in terms of women's security, justice and inclusion.

Source: United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), 'Promoting peace by addressing the linkages between gender, climate change and security', Politically Speaking, 31 Mar. 2022.

policymaking or neglected by public institutions, especially in the context of repeated shocks resulting from climate change and deteriorating livelihoods, the risk of social unrest and instability increases.

Masculine norms and structural barriers that prevent the inclusion of women and Indigenous people in decision making also weaken peacebuilding efforts and climate security outcomes and can prevent young men from rejecting those norms and pursuing feminine-coded community work. Excluded groups often hold valuable knowledge about local ecosystems, adaptation strategies and mediation practices, yet are routinely excluded from (or added in the final stages of) formal negotiations and high-level decision making.³⁷ This undermines the quality, inclusivity and sustainability of the negotiated outcomes. To reduce the risk of grievance-based insecurity and promote climate resilience, governments must ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, Indigenous peoples and other under-represented groups from the earliest stages of decision-making processes. This includes strengthening concrete measures to advance women's participation, addressing structural inequalities through gender-responsive climate finance, investing in local capacities and strengthening accountability and governance frameworks.

from the Middle East and North Africa', MEDRC Transboundary Environments Practitioners Briefing Series no. 22, 2025; and Papastavrou, S., 'Intersecting priorities: Advancing the women, peace and security agenda through climate security initiatives', IAI Commentaries 24, 29 June 2024.

³² Al-Saidi et al. (note 31).

³³ Al-Saidi et al. (note 31); and Arino, M. V., 'Women peacebuilders in mediation efforts: Challenges and pathways for inclusion', IAI Commentaries 25, 23 Apr. 2025.

³⁴ Dazé, A. and Hunter, C., *Advancing Gender-Responsive National Adaptation Plan*

(NAP) Processes, NAP Global Network Synthesis Report 2023–2024 (IISD: Winnipeg, Dec. 2024).

³⁵ Dwyer and Nuckhir (note 27); and Sinwat, W. et al., *Beyond a Seat at the Table: Pathways for Gender-equitable Participation in Climate Adaptation Decision-making* (CARE France: 2024).

³⁶ Dazé and Hunter (note 34).

³⁷ Papastavrou (note 31).

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The Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheets aim to generate reliable, relevant, timely and actionable information and analysis on climate-related peace and security risks in selected countries and regions on the United Nations Security Council agenda.

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