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# THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: A LEGAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

The impact of climate change on human rights is one of the most prominent issues of internal and international concern, given its close connection with human existence, especially in poor countries, where the human cost is increasing day by day, as climate change continues compared to what it was at the end of the nineteenth century. Due to the high temperatures caused especially by emissions of greenhouse gases, resulting in a large part from human activities. This phenomenon has become one of the biggest challenges that threatens human life, security and the environment. Indeed, according to the reports of the Human Rights Council, all human rights are likely to be affected by the phenomenon of global warming, and other rights seem to be more affected by this phenomenon, such as the right to life and the right to Adequate food, the right to water, the right to health, the right to a healthy environment, the right to housing, etc. In addition, global warming contributes to the displacement of millions of people due to desertification, water scarcity, floods and storms, and it also contributes to the attempt of large numbers of people to cross international borders to take refuge in other countries, escaping from hunger and squalid conditions, as well as its impact on many other rights.

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Human Rights, effect of climate change on human rights, international efforts to face climate change, Climate Change Refugees.

**Introduction:**

The vocabulary used to discuss human rights and climate change is very distinct, with each having its own reference history and associations. Words that make sense in one register could sound strange in the other or have different connotations for different audiences. In this context, the term "human rights" refers to a certain collection of assertions regarding the rights of every person, regardless of "race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other viewpoints, birth or other position." These statements, which were first stated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are believed to have both a broad moral authority and a (somewhat more limited) legal authority.

Human rights outlined in treaties are typically divided into two categories: "civil and political" and "social, economic, and cultural." The former includes the freedoms of speech, assembly, political involvement, a fair trial, privacy, a private life at home, and protection against torture. In addition to the "enjoyment of the highest attainable quality of physical and mental health" and "enough food, clothing and housing, and... the continuous improvement of living conditions," these rights also include the capacity to work, pursue education, and obtain social security benefits, the latter rights have often been attained through domestic welfare procedures rather than courts, while the former rights are typically secured through judicial mechanisms of the different human right courts, especially at the international level.

Climate change, more than any other issue before it, firmly embeds the topic of human rights fulfilment in the realm of development policy. This is due to the fact that combating climate change will include re-examining development paradigms and making significant decisions about resource access and utilisation, both of which have a direct impact on human rights. However, international law does not clearly outline how to assess how development operations affect human rights or how to hold the major development players accountable on this basis. Without a doubt, this helps to explain why human rights are often neglected in climate change debates.

Hence, this research work will focus more on the new compound terms Climate Change and Human Rights because in the contemporary "era", both terms come across together and make more sense to get to know more about them. The main discussion would be on the effect of climate change on some basic human rights of human beings who are affected by climate change and environmental consequences.

**Methodology:**

This article is based on doctrinal research and was conducted using the descriptive-analytical method. The data collection method has been carried out using archive library resources and internet databases.

**The definition of the term climate change:**

Today, climate change constitutes the first threat facing humanity and represents a global problem that needs solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause pollution of the atmosphere, global warming and impacts on the ozone layer on the one hand and affect rainfall patterns across the world on the other hand. Accordingly, we will try to address in this paragraph the concept of the phenomenon of climate change and the factors contributing to it<sup>1</sup>. **The definition of climate change:**

According to “the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” article 1, of 1992, which defines the meaning of the term climate change, is as follows:

*"Climate change" means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods<sup>2</sup>."*

**Contributing factors to climate change:**

In fact, there is a group of factors that affect and control the quality of climate and weather, and every change in the climate, whether local or regional, is due to it, and this is a sufficient reason for the loss of drinking water reserves, as, within 50 years, the number of people suffering from a lack of drinking water will increase. As well as the decline in the agricultural yield, which

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<sup>1</sup> Roger A Pielke, ‘What Is Climate Change?’ (2004) 15 Energy and Environment 515  
</doi/pdf/10.1260/0958305041494576?download=true> accessed 3 October 2025.

<sup>2</sup> LA Greene, ‘United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’ (2000)  
<<https://www.un.org/climateaction/mechanism/en/united-nations-framework-convention-climate-change/unfccc-and-climate-peace-and-security>> accessed 3 October 2025.

thus the latter leads to a shrinking of food stocks<sup>3</sup>.

The decline in soil fertility and exacerbation of erosion, by changing plant habitats, increasing drought and changing precipitation patterns will lead to exacerbation of desertification, and automatically will indirectly increase the use of chemical fertilizers, which increases toxic pollution, and the spread of pests and diseases as a result of high temperatures and the spread of disease-carrying insects, in addition to high Droughts, floods, storms and others lead to catastrophic crises.

### **1. Global warming phenomena:**

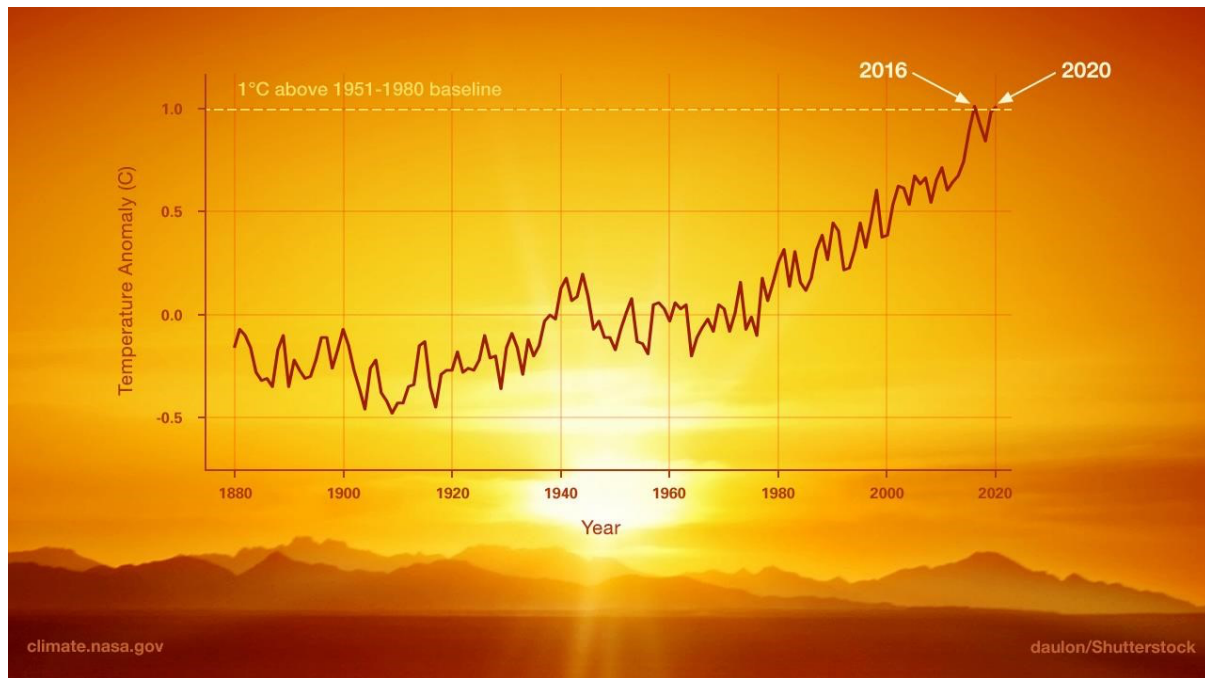
The concept of global warming that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change came up with in its third report of 2001 can be defined as follows:

*It is a natural phenomenon, as part of infrared radiation emanating from the earth into the atmosphere remains trapped in this atmosphere by gases called greenhouse gases, which leads to an increase in the temperature of the earth or the lower layer of the atmosphere surrounding the earth<sup>4</sup>.*

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<sup>3</sup> Khalid Mohamed Omemen and Mona Othman Aldbbah, 'Climate Change: Key Contributors and Sustainable Solutions' (2025) 274 Int. J. Electr. Eng. and Sustain. 10  
<<https://ijees.org/index.php/ijees/article/view/105>> accessed 3 October 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Ogunlade Davidson and others, 'Climate Change 2001: Synthesis Report' (2001).



This graph shows the change in average worldwide surface temperature from 1951 to 1980, with 2020 tied with 2016 as the hottest year ever recorded. (Source: [NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies](#)).

To know more about global surface temperature [here](#). Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech.

Today, the international community faces two options, according to the global complaint surrounding the issue of climate change. The first option calls for considering the problem of climate change and global warming as academic issues. Therefore, things are left as they are, and the world is forced to make a sudden adjustment in its social and economic structure. To adapt to the changing climate and face the disasters that may ensue.

Some scientists go on to say that there are great doubts about the phenomenon of global warming, which makes it reckless to spend huge amounts of money in order to avoid consequences that may occur and cause serious damage to the environment. This may not be caused by natural factors, and the response is not made according to this opinion when these changes occur without resorting to preventive measures<sup>5</sup>.

Regarding the second option available to the world community, it is represented by taking preventative and anticipatory action by putting into place direct measures to gradually reduce

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<sup>5</sup> William D Fletcher and Craig B Smith, 'Addressing Global Warming', *Reaching Net Zero* (Elsevier 2020).

the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, without the occurrence of climate change, and by implementing measures that would reduce energy consumption and turn to fuels with a higher content. The precautionary legal approach is widely adopted by nations in accordance with their capacities. First, carbon and stopping the production of chlorine, fungi, and carbon compounds responsible for eroding the ozone layer are addressed. Additionally, efforts are made to promote measures related to the use of renewable energy, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to protect the environment<sup>6</sup>.

## **2. Producing energy:**

The process of burning fossil fuels to provide power and heat accounts for a sizable portion of the world's emissions. Burning coal, oil, or gas still supplies the majority of the world's electricity, which produces carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, two potent greenhouse gases that cover the planet and trap the sun's heat. A little over a quarter of the world's electricity is generated by renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, and other natural resources, which, in contrast to fossil fuels, create very little to no greenhouse gases or other air pollutants<sup>7</sup>.

## **3. Destruction of forests:**

In addition to generating power, the process of destroying forests to make way for agriculture, pastures, or other purposes increases emissions because when trees are felled, the stored carbon is released. an estimated 12 million hectares of forest are burned annually<sup>8</sup>. Destruction of forests reduces nature's capacity to keep emissions out of the atmosphere because they absorb carbon dioxide. a percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions is caused by deforestation, along with agriculture and other changes in land use.

## **4. Manufacturing goods:**

Emissions from manufacturing are mostly the result of burning fossil fuels to create energy for the production of items like textiles, electronics, plastics, cement, iron, and steel. Gases are also released during mining and other industrial activities, as well as during construction. Some products, including plastics, are manufactured from chemicals derived from fossil fuels, as are

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> William D Fletcher and Craig B Smith, 'Unique Problems of Major Contributors to Global Warming', *Reaching Net Zero* (Elsevier 2020).

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

many of the machines used in manufacturing. These machines frequently run on coal, oil, or gas. One of the leading global producers of greenhouse gas emissions is the industrial sector<sup>9</sup>.

## 5. Pollution:

Pollution is a deliberate, organic, or automatic change in the shape of the environment, resulting from human waste, and it is a change in the natural environment in a way that carries with it dangerous consequences for living organisms.

It is also defined as a direct or indirect physical, thermal or biological change, or any radioactive activity that affects a characteristic of any part of the environment in a way that results in effective risks affecting the health and security of all living organisms, and we find that all these definitions agree that pollution brings about a change in an element of the environment<sup>10</sup>.

### Legally:

Pollution was defined according to the 1979 Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, which was held in Geneva on November 13, 1979, in Article 1:

(a) *"Air Pollution" means the introduction by man, directly or indirectly, of substances or energy into the air resulting in deleterious effects of such a nature as to endanger human health, harm living resources and ecosystems and material property and impair or interfere with amenities and other legitimate uses of the environment, and "air pollutants" shall be construed accordingly.*

(b) *"Long-range transboundary air pollution" means air pollution whose physical origin is situated wholly or in part within the area under the national jurisdiction of one State and which has adverse effects in the area under the jurisdiction of another State at such a distance that it is not generally possible to distinguish the contribution of individual emission sources or groups of sources<sup>11</sup>.*

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<sup>9</sup> UN, 'Causes and Effects of Climate Change' (UN Website)

<<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/causes-effects-climate-change>> accessed 3 October 2025.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Convention on long-range transboundary air pollution 1979 (United Nations).

Pollution is divided into the following types: Water pollution, Air pollution, and Soil contamination.

All types of pollution have previously affected the environment in general and the life and continuity of living organisms, such as humans, animals, and plants, since the life of these organisms depends mainly on the environment and the resources that the environment provides, such as food, water, and air.

Therefore, pollution of these environmental elements that are important to life will definitely and greatly affect the health and life of all living beings.

### **The Effects of the climate change phenomenon on the environment.**

The entire world is vulnerable to disasters resulting from climate change, and high temperatures can cause massive changes in living conditions, as well as the natural capabilities on the surface of the globe, which increases the danger of this, the lack of effective care for environmental issues and the lack of common sense. where the majority of people do not care about the seriousness of this, due to the lack of environmental awareness and culture. Accordingly, we find several effects of the phenomenon of climate change on the environment, most notably:

- **A negative impact on agricultural productivity.**

Nowadays, people in many countries suffer from fewer growing seasons, like in Iraq. Due to air, water, and soil pollution, the productivity of agriculture has been affected dangerously.

Moreover, the internal displacement of people and their loss of jobs and farms also affects the productivity of agriculture<sup>12</sup>.

- **Inadequate food.**

Global hunger and poor nutrition are on the rise for a variety of reasons, including climate change and an increase in extreme weather occurrences. Crops, animals, and fisheries might all be lost or become less effective. Marine resources that provide food for billions of people are

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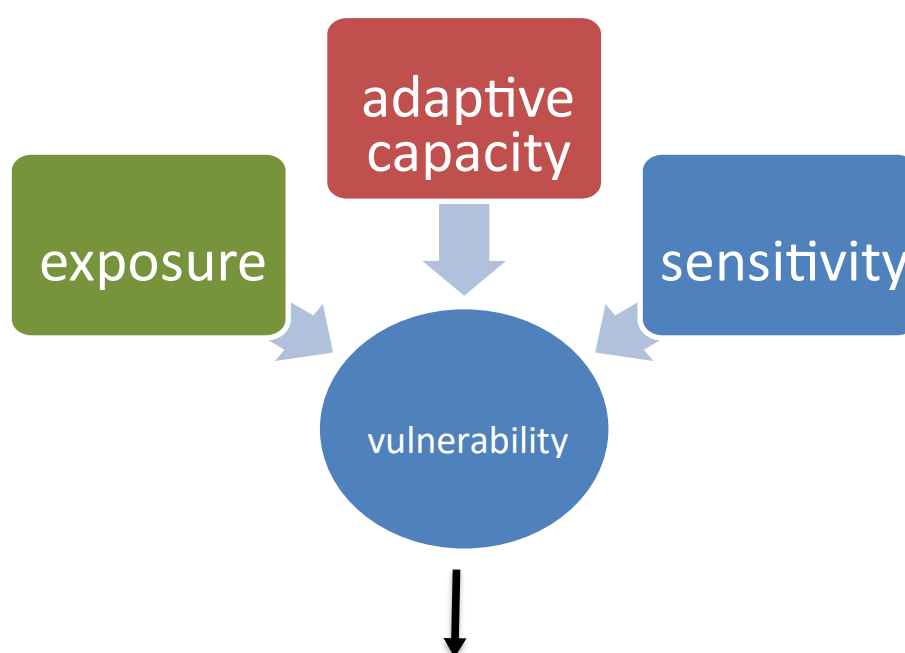
<sup>12</sup> Sarah Sanbar, 'Iraq's Climate Crisis Is a Human Rights Crisis' [2022] *Rudaw Research Center* <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/03/27/iraqs-climate-crisis-human-rights-crisis>> accessed 3 October 2025.



in danger as a result of the ocean's increasing acidity. Food sources from herding, hunting, and fishing have been hampered in several Arctic regions due to changes in the snow and ice cover. Heat stress can reduce available water and grazing areas, which can lower crop output and have an impact on cattle<sup>13</sup>.

- **More health risks:**

Climate change is the greatest health threat facing humanity. Climate impacts harm health, through air pollution, disease, extreme weather events, forced displacement, stresses on mental health and increased hunger and malnutrition in places where people cannot thrive or find sufficient food. Every year, environmental factors claim the lives of about 13 million people. Changing weather patterns spread disease, and extreme weather events increase deaths and make it harder for healthcare systems to keep up<sup>14</sup>.



**“Health consequences”**

Certain illnesses and disorders may be caused or worsened by climate change threats such as air pollution and heat. When susceptible people are exposed to risks and lack the ability to adjust to them, they may suffer unfavourable consequences. These people may suffer from

<sup>13</sup> Courtney Lindwall, ‘Effects of Climate Change - Impacts and Examples’ (NRDC, 2022) <<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/what-are-effects-climate-change>> accessed 4 October 2025.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

physical problems, acute trauma, or other negative repercussions on their mental health and well-being.

**Figure 1. The impact of climate change on health.**

• **Poverty and displacement:**

One of the main impacts of climate change at present is that it increases the factors which put people in poverty and keep them in hunger; floods may wash away urban slums, destroying homes and livelihoods. Heat can also make it difficult to work outside jobs. And water scarcity may affect crops, leading to a major drought and millions of farmers losing their jobs and remaining in a state of unemployment and poverty. Over the past decade (2010-2019), weatherrelated events have displaced an average of 23.1 million people each year<sup>15</sup>, leaving them much more vulnerable to poverty. Most of the refugees come from countries that are more vulnerable and less prepared to adapt to the effects of climate change, such as the State of Iraq, which is suffering today from a severe drought that has led to the drying up of underground wells and rivers, and the loss of many of their jobs and their internal displacement to other regions.

Moreover, Desertification, Pests and diseases, and Hotter temperatures are also among the main Effects of the climate change phenomenon on the environment that also affect the lives of human beings and their security and basic human rights<sup>16</sup>.

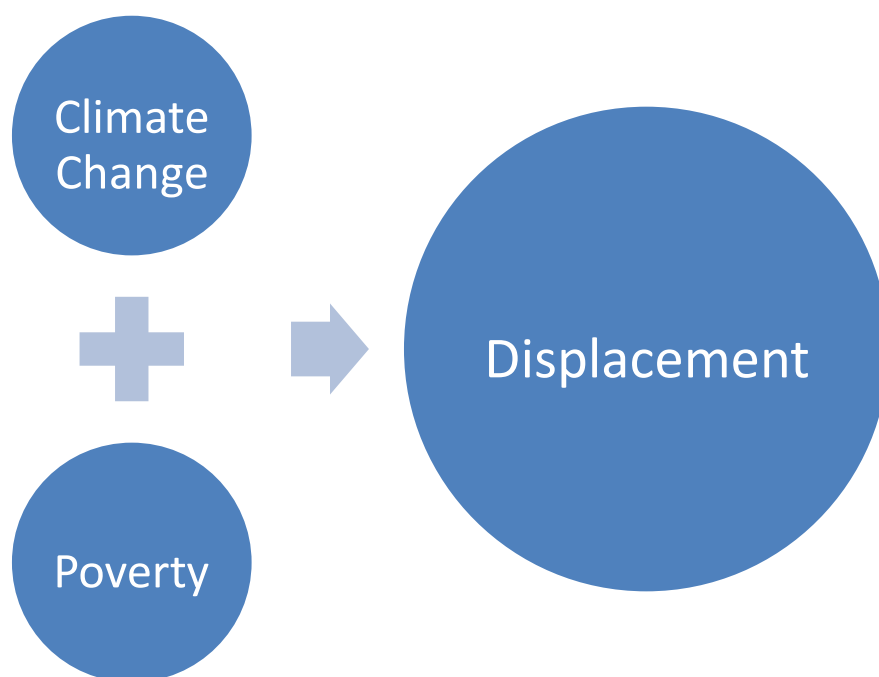
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<sup>15</sup> Vera Schlegel, 'Climate Change and Poverty' [2014] *Expresión Económica* 109

<<https://www.actionaid.org.uk/our-work/emergencies-disasters-humanitarian-response/climate-change-andpoverty>> accessed 4 October 2025.

<sup>16</sup> Ayman Ahmed and others, 'The Impacts of Climate Change on Displaced Populations: A Call for Action' (2021) 3 *Journal of Climate Change and Health* 100057

<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2667278221000547>> accessed 4 October 2025.



**Figure 2. The Consequences of Climate Change**

### **Climate Change Effects on Human Rights.**

Climate change poses a serious threat to people's lives and well-being for individuals and communities all over the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) paints a comprehensive picture of the negative effects that the observed and anticipated climatic changes will have on millions of people as well as the ecosystems, natural resources, and physical infrastructure on which they depend. Access to resources like food, clean water, and other essential ones that maintain human existence will be put at risk due to both sudden events that immediately imperil human lives and safety, as well as more gradual environmental deterioration<sup>17</sup>.

As a result, a large number of people's ability to practice their human rights will be considerably influenced by climate change. This is not only a hypothetical feasibility for the future. Worldwide food shortages, environmental damage, and drought are already outcomes of weather pattern change. Some regions are more severely impacted than others, with more direct links to climate change. For instance, sea level leap up has had an irreparable impact on the security and way of livelihood of many riparian residents, and rising temperatures are

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<sup>17</sup> 'AR5 Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability — IPCC' (2014) <<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/>> accessed 4 October 2025.

drastically altering the Arctic ecosystems that provide support for numerous indigenous societies.

### • Right to Life

It is widely acknowledged that human-caused climate change will have a detrimental impact on a wide range of individuals, especially the most vulnerable. In particular, it is predicted to result in increased exposure to illnesses spread by vectors and by water, as well as increased floods, heat stress, food shortages, and drought. A declaration on climate change and international security from the High Representative and the European Commission to the European Council claims that climate change is "a danger multiplier which exacerbates current trends, tensions, and instability." It argues that it will exacerbate insecurities such as tensions over depleted resources, border disputes and land loss, disputes over energy supplies, human rights violations, conflicts brought on by migration, and tensions between those whose emissions caused climate change and those who will experience its effects<sup>18</sup>.

The right to life is frequently seen as one of the most essential human rights. International human rights treaties and customary international law both compel states to refrain from doing activities that harm or threaten human life. The right to life is protected by the majority of the most significant human rights agreements. For instance, Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person."

Article 6 of the equivalent International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) declares that "every human being possesses the intrinsic right to life<sup>19</sup>."

Many treaties, notably the ICCPR, aim to define the parameters of the right to life by just banning "intentional deprivation of life." However, states' obligations in relation to this right go beyond the need of an intentional deprivation of life. There appears to be a general understanding that in order to protect people's lives, governments must take preventative steps, which means they must end hazards or harm to people's lives when they are foreseen. According

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<sup>18</sup> 'Right to Life and the Impact of Climate Change.' (*Climate Rights International*, 2025)  
<<https://cri.org/rightto-life/>> accessed 4 October 2025.

<sup>19</sup> Poovarasan R, 'The Impact Of Climate Change On Fundamental Human Rights, Including The Right To Life, Health, Water, Food, And Shelter' (2025) VII Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research 7680  
<<https://www.ijllr.com/post/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-fundamental-human-rights-including-the-rightto-life-health-water>> accessed 4 October 2025.

to the UN Human Rights Committee, the right to life "has been too frequently narrowly interpreted." States are required to take proactive measures to protect this right since the term "inherent right to life" cannot be legitimately understood in a narrow sense.

According to the UN Human Rights Committee, authorities may be obligated to make proactive steps to reduce infant mortality, prevent malnutrition, and fend off epidemics in order to uphold the environmental component of the right to life. *E.H.P. v. Canada*, A case concerning the storage of radioactive waste near the plaintiffs' dwelling, was cited by the UN Human Rights Committee as having "severe issues with the responsibility of States parties to safeguard human life."

Human lives will be at risk due to a variety of current and future consequences of climate change, both directly and indirectly. Heat stroke, floods, and other weather-related diseases and injuries will affect more people, as stated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The right to life will also be impacted by ground-level ozone-related cardio-respiratory morbidity and death, as well as a rise in hunger, malnutrition, and diseases linked to it. Climate change will exacerbate weather-related disasters, which already have a negative impact on people's enjoyment of their right to life, particularly in poor nations. For instance, between 2000 and 2004, over 98% of the 262 million individuals affected by climate catastrophes each year were residents of developing countries<sup>20</sup>.

Through changes to maps of water availability, shoreline borders, disease frequency, population distribution, and food security, climate change has the potential to greatly aggravate violent conflict and insecurity. New information by the U.S. Centre for Naval Analyses contends that climate change acts as a threat propagator in already vulnerable regions, aggravating conditions that encourage failed states and give rise to extremism and terrorism. Threats to life may be more immediate in some countries and regions than in others. "Projected climate change presents a major danger to America's national security," the report's authors said.

### • Right to Health

Studies shows that climate change has already had an impact on some health sector, and if it continues as predicted under various scenarios, the main health effects will be; (i) an increased

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

risk of injury, illness, and death due to more intense heat waves and fires; (ii) an increased risk of undernutrition due to decreased food production in underdeveloped areas; and (iii) health effects brought on by lost work capacity and decreased labour output. The effects of rising average temperatures and humidity will cause serious health issues in some locations (especially in areas where the hottest months of the year already exceed the international guideline for safe job activity). Although there may be some good effects on health, the magnitude and intensity of adverse effects on health will outweigh these effects by a growing margin<sup>21</sup>.

The right to health, like the right to life, is guaranteed by numerous well-known international human rights treaties. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recognises the right to health, "the greatest possible condition of physiological and mental health". According to the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, this right is required for the practice of all other human rights. As claimed by the CESCR and other authoritative or adjudicatory bodies, the substantive content of this right includes access to timely and appropriate health care, safe and potable water, adequate sanitation, a sufficient supply of safe food, nutrition, and housing, wholesome working conditions, and health information and education. The Committee continues by saying that those who have their right to health violated should be entitled to adequate redress as well as access to national and international legal remedies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), these are the fundamental aspects of health that will be in danger because of climate change<sup>22</sup>.

The rights to food and water are essential for the enjoyment of the human right to health. In a good way, the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Article 24(2) states that "States Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the greatest achievable quality of health and facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health." States agree to act appropriately "to combat disease and malnutrition through the supply of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water, taking into mind the dangers and risks of environmental contamination" based on this<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Mason Meier, Flavia Bustreo and Lawrence O Gostin, 'Climate Change, Public Health and Human Rights' (Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute, 22 October 2022) 13744 <<https://www.mdpi.com/16604601/19/21/13744/htm>> accessed 4 October 2025.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

Numerous multinational environmental agreements recognise and address the potential negative effects of the environment on human well-being. The UNFCCC includes "substantial negative implications on human health and welfare" in its definition of adverse effects of climate change and mandates that Parties take these effects into account in pertinent economic, social, and environmental strategies.

Several studies on international human rights have confirmed the close relationship between environmental integrity and health. Fatma Zohra Ksentini, the former UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities' Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, recognised the right to health as a basic right and investigated how the environment impacts it. After reviewing a variety of international human rights treaties and state constitutions, she concluded that "everyone has a right to the best feasible level of health" under customary international law. She also concluded that "the right to health in the context of the environment principally entails actual protection against natural hazards and freedom from pollution<sup>24</sup>."

#### • Right to Self-Determination

International law's recognition of the right to self-determination emerged during the time of decolonization from the European empire. Since then, governments, mostly in Europe, as well as indigenous peoples and minorities more broadly, mainly in Latin America and Africa, have emerged, giving it a fresh lease of life. The right to self-determination has to be strengthened in order to deal with the current scenario of small island governments potentially being drowned by increasing sea levels brought on by climate change.

The challenges that small island states encounter are twofold. The first is the actual, practical issue of an area gradually becoming uninhabitable due to submersion or marine encroachment, which results in a lack of fresh water, arable land, or wave protection. The second issue is legal: Can an inhospitable set of islands, or perhaps a reef, nevertheless assert its status as a State? How far may their people assert ownership of natural resources under the rules of the sea, particularly in future marine zones?

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<sup>24</sup> Alicia Ely Yamin, 'The Right to Health under International Law and Its Relevance to the United States' (Shiraz University Of Medical Sciences, 1 July 2005) 1156 <[https://jhss.sums.ac.ir/article\\_42843.html](https://jhss.sums.ac.ir/article_42843.html)> accessed 4 October 2025.

The right to self-determination, which did not arise to address these difficulties, does not cleanly fix the dilemma of states facing inundation. Even if these areas become inhospitable, the people of these States may be able to assert that they still have the right to exist and to manage their natural resources, particularly with regard to their maritime zones, by using this right<sup>25</sup>.

### **Mitigation and Adaptation on Human Rights.**

How governments and other actors adapt to the challenges posed by climate change may affect the enjoyment of human rights. This holds true for both initiatives taken to lessen greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that contribute to climate change, as well as activities taken to adapt to its impacts.

#### **(a) Mitigation**

There are several instances where specific mitigation measures designed to cut or sequester GHG emissions can have a bad impact on the rights of particular populations. The most heinous infractions have taken place in relation to:

1. Hydroelectric projects: something that commonly consequences in the eviction of local communities and the destruction of the ecosystems on which they rely, may also have a severe influence on the health and way of life of those who live downstream by reducing river flows.
2. Policies and initiatives promoting biofuels may increase the stress on the scarcity of water resources, the rate of deforestation, and the displacement of indigenous peoples and small-scale farmers through land acquisition. Based on an Oxfam analysis from 2008, the "rush to develop" biofuels like as palm oil, motivated in part by EU biofuel goals, exacerbated food price problems, "threatened" 60 million indigenous people, and "pushed 30 million people into poverty." There have also been several recorded human rights violations and detrimental consequences on

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<sup>25</sup> Jasmin L'Green and Zara Bendit-Rosser, 'The Impact Of Climate Change On The Right To Self-Determination' (*Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 2022)  
<<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/the-impact-of-climate-change-on-the-right-to-selfdetermination/>> accessed 4 October 2025.



neighbourhood stakeholders in the context of individual biofuel efforts<sup>26</sup>.

### **(b) Adaptation**

Both failures to adapt and adaptation initiatives can have an impact on human rights, specifically for the most vulnerable. A concern is that certain adaptation measures may benefit one group at the expense of another, such as coastal defences that protect one town while putting another at greater risk of erosion and floods. There is also a risk that adaptation measures will be implemented without the necessary public involvement, which might have unfavourable consequences for the individuals they are supposed to protect. Because relocation and resettlement programmes pose a risk of human rights violations, it is critical to ensure that participants have a sufficient say in and agree to the programmes' operation. It needs to be noted that both the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund have incorporated environmental and social safeguards<sup>27</sup>.

### **Conclusion:**

Writers conclude from the foregoing that climate change is a social, economic, security, and humanitarian issue that has dire consequences for human rights, both directly and indirectly, at the individual and collective levels, and that its negative effects are unevenly distributed, disproportionately affecting the poorest regions and countries. Its consequences extend beyond the rights of current generations to those of future generations. This, if anything, emphasises the significance of addressing human rights challenges caused by climate change, as well as the need to adopt appropriate steps that are consistent with the general goals of human rights.

The following are some suggestions that would mitigate the effects of climate change on human rights:

- Countries must take immediate action to mitigate climate change in accordance with the Paris Agreement in order to prevent its effects from worsening.
- Strengthening international and national mechanisms - similar to the Warsaw

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<sup>26</sup> Barry S Levy and Jonathan A Patz, 'Climate Change, Human Rights, and Social Justice' (No longer published by Elsevier, 1 May 2015) 310  
<<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214999615012242>> accessed 4 October 2025.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

Mechanism - to monitor, document, follow up and protect those affected by climate change, whether displaced persons or refugees.

- Establish early warning systems and tools, prevention, and preparedness mechanisms regarding internal and cross-border displacement.
- Building the technical and operational capacities of national institutions to develop prevention and response strategies.
- Issuing an international instrument recognising the role of climate change in pushing people to move across borders, as in many countries, till now they do not recognise the climate change refugees.
- Prosecuting countries that violate international environmental law due to the severe damage they cause to human rights amounts, in our belief, to crimes against humanity.

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