Colombia's decades-long conflict culminated in the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which included aims to achieve peace through rural reform, reintegration of former combatants, addressing illicit crop cultivation, and ensuring land restitution and voluntary return for displaced individuals. However, the combination of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), entrenched violence, social inequality and environmental challenges continues to hinder progress, particularly in rural areas. Since 2022, the current government has pursued a policy of 'Total Peace', alongside implementing the peace agreement. This includes peace talks with armed groups and addressing structural violence, racial discrimination, gender inequality, social inequalities and environmental concerns. This fact sheet focuses on how climate-related peace and security risks interact with specific provisions of the peace agreement, and provides an update on the situation since 2022.

- Rural reforms have progressed slowly, while environmental degradation and climate change impacts continue to undermine livelihood security and heighten vulnerabilities in rural areas.
- Conflict and climate-related hazards contribute to internal displacement, disproportionately affecting marginalized Afro-Colombians, Indigenous Peoples, and women and girls. People living in informal settlements are particularly vulnerable to landslides, floods and other natural hazards.
- Environmental degradation is closely linked to armed groups' tactics.
 In areas under NSAG control, appropriation of land, rivers and other resources accentuates vulnerabilities by limiting natural resource access and availability, which affects livelihood security.
- The protracted conflict has displaced millions and led to widespread land dispossession, with elites and armed groups seizing control of land, often aided by state officials. This dispossession is also tied to the expansion of agro-industrial and mining projects, where vested interests from elites and armed groups hinder land restitution efforts.

To fully implement the peace agreement, the Colombian government and its partners must strengthen natural resource governance in areas with limited state presence and high resource exploitation. Natural resource governance can be used to facilitate inclusive governance, intercommunal trust building and cooperation. Leveraging the peace agreement's provisions on rural reform, crop substitution, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) can advance integrated climate action and peacebuilding efforts.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- ➤ The United Nations Security Council should task the UN Verification Mission in Colombia with conducting an assessment of how climate-related security risks and environmental degradation affect Colombia's 2016 peace agreement, particularly the full implementation of comprehensive rural reforms. The assessment should include recommendations for the Colombian government and other relevant partners.
- Relevant UN bodies, such as the International Organization for Migration, and other international partners should continue to support the Colombian government in strengthening its capacity to address displacement and confinement. Special attention should be paid to strengthening resilience to climate shocks to prevent them from escalating into disasters, addressing inequality, and fostering better service delivery and social cohesion in host communities.
- ➤ The Colombian government should fulfil its commitment to increased protection for environmental defenders, as outlined in both the 2016 peace agreement and the 2018 Escazú Agreement (adopted into Colombian law in 2024). By implementing these agreements, the government can improve environmental protection and address the grievances tied to land dispossession, resource use and illegal economies that often fuel conflict.
- The Colombian government, together with its international and local partners, should ensure that development projects aimed at reducing marginalization and inequality and improving governance are climate-informed and conflict-sensitive, in order to avoid creating new vulnerabilities. Integrating climate, peace and security considerations into Colombia's nationally determined contribution and national adaptation plan could lead to development that is more peace-positive and climate-sensitive.

Figure 1. Key statistics

Climate and environment

((3)

Projected mean annual temperature increase of up 1.49°C by 2060 $\,$



Increase in rainfall, flooding and landslides in the Amazonian basin and coastal regions



El Niño Southern Oscillation brings more intense floods and droughts $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) +\left(1\right$



Agriculture is a source of income for around 15% of the population

Population

Total population 52.3 million (2024)

Internally displaced population 6.9 million (2024)

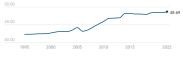
Population in moderate or severe food insecurity

13 million (2024)

ND-GAIN Country Index

other global challenges, and its readiness to improve resilience. It is a score out of 100; the higher the score, the less vulnerable and more ready the country.

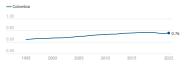
— Colombia



Global Peace Index (GPI)

Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI measures a country's achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. It is a score out of 1.0; the higher the score, the higher the level of human development.





Sources: United Nations Population Fund, World Population Dashboard, 'Colombia', accessed Aug. 2024; World Food Programme, 'Food security assessment of the Colombian population 2024', Executive Summary, May 2024; Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), 'ND-GAIN Index country rankings 2021', accessed Aug. 2024; Vision of Humanity, 'Global Peace Index 2024', accessed Aug. 2024; and UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'UNHCR Colombia: 2024', Fact sheet, Apr. 2024.

Climate trends and projections

Colombia has Pacific and Caribbean coastlines, eastern lowland plains, a south-eastern Amazon basin and high-altitude Andes mountains. The El Niño Southern Oscillation leads to interannual climate variations. including droughts and higher temperatures, while La Niña brings floods and colder temperatures.

Temperature: Mean annual temperatures range from 13°C to 27°C across altitudes. Mean temperatures have risen by 0.22°C per decade since 1971 and are expected to rise as much as 1.49°C by 2060, threatening the loss of critical glaciers and highland water supplies.²

Precipitation: Average annual rainfall varies from between 6 mm and 7000 mm in the Andean interior and on the Pacific coast, to below 500 mm in the north and south-west. By 2050, rainfall is expected to decrease in the highlands, increasing the risk of drought. In the Amazon basin and coastal regions, rainfall is projected to increase, leading to flooding and landslides.3

Socioecological vulnerabilities

Agriculture plays a key role in Colombia's economy and people's livelihoods, accounting for 8 per cent of the gross domestic product and employing about 15 per cent of the population.⁴ The agricultural sector, which primarily grows food crops, is divided between industrial farming and subsistence farming.⁵ Colombia's socio-economic divides are pronounced between urban and rural areas. While urban centres benefit from better access to services, rural communities face challenges such as higher poverty rates, limited infrastructure and heightened vulnerability to climate change.6

Approximately 84 per cent of Colombia's population live in areas exposed to multiple natural and climate-related hazards, including floods, landslides and droughts. Annually, an estimated 230 000 people temporarily lose access to basic services due to such hazards, and without adaptation measures this figure is expected to increase by 60 per cent by 2050.7 Socio-economically marginalized groups, including subsistence farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-Colombians and internally displaced persons (IDPs), are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.8 Marginalized women, particularly those from Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, face even greater risks due to their limited access to land, resources and decision-making power.9 Weak governance in conflict-affected regions exacerbates these vulnerabilities. Regional instability and the presence of armed groups hinder access to services and force many marginalized households into illegal activities, such as logging and illicit crop cultivation, worsening environmental degradation and economic instability.10

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 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, and how these

- ¹ World Bank, Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 'Colombia: Climatology', accessed 5 May 2024.
- ² World Bank, *Climate Risk Profile: Colombia* (World Bank Group: Washington, DC, 2023).
- Chaulagain, D. et al., 'Extreme dry and wet events in the Pacific region of Colombia estimated in the 21st century based on the Standardized Precipitation Index and CORDEX climate projections', Atmosphere, vol. 14, no. 2 (2023); and World Bank (note 2).
- ⁴ World Bank (note 2); World Bank Open Data, 'Agriculture, forestry, and fishing, value added (% of GDP)', accessed 5 May 2024; and World Bank Open Data, 'Employment in agriculture (% of total employment) (modelled ILO estimate)—Colombia', accessed 5 May 2024.
- ⁵ Oxfam, 'A snapshot of inequality: What the latest agricultural census reveals about land distribution in Colombia', May 2017.
- ⁶ Carmargo, E., 'Does power at home protect women from violence? A comparative analysis between urban and rural Colombian women', Journal of Aggression Maltreatment & Trauma, vol. 32, no. 1-2 (Feb. 2023); and Llanes Valenzuela, M. C.,
- [Strong poverty reduction in 2022, with some nuances], 2023 (in Spanish). World Bank, Colombia: Country Climate and Development Report (World Bank Group: Washington, DC, July 2023).
- ⁸ Smith, J. M., Olosky, L. and Grosman Fernández, J., The Climate-Gender-Conflict Nexus: Amplifying Women's Contributions at the Grassroots (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security: Washington, DC, 2021).

intersect with the provisions of Colombia's 2016 peace agreement: (a) livelihood deterioration, (b) migration and mobility, (c) military and armed actors, and (d) political and economic exploitation and mismanagement.11

Livelihood deterioration

Colombia's peace agreement mandates comprehensive rural reforms aimed at developing neglected rural areas, closing the rural-urban development gap, improving rural livelihoods, protecting the environment and ensuring the right to food. 12 These reforms focus on addressing the extreme concentration of land ownership, promoting agricultural development, and securing both income and food security for rural populations.

Rural development and the improvement of rural livelihoods can increase communities' adaptive capacity and resilience, including to the effects of climate change. However, climate change and insecurity may hinder the full implementation of comprehensive rural reform due to the risk they pose to livelihoods and food security. The effects of climate change are altering the availability and quality of water, land, forests and other natural resources, affecting livelihoods throughout the country.¹³ In 2024, 2.7 million people faced drought impacts due to El Niño conditions, while 18.6 million people were reported to be facing insufficient food consumption.¹⁴ Predictions indicate that rising temperatures, soil erosion, desertification and flooding could affect over half of Colombia's farmland, reducing 80 per cent of the crop yield by 2050.15

The peace agreement highlights the importance of strengthening the rural economy by supporting agriculture and agribusinesses. Key measures include improving rural infrastructure such as irrigation, supporting land distribution to agricultural workers who hold insufficient or no land, and boosting production. Efforts are being made by the current government to prioritize the implementation of comprehensive rural reform and boost the agricultural sector in Colombia; however, challenges remain. 16 In addition, climate change projections forecast decreased productivity due to higher temperatures and less rainfall, threatening agriculture and related livelihoods in rural communities.¹⁷

The UN Security Council should task the UN Verification Mission with assessing how climate-related risks and environmental degradation affect specific provisions of the peace agreement, particularly the full implementation of comprehensive rural reforms in Colombia. In addition to this, the Colombian government and its partners should promote climate-resilient agriculture, environmental protection and rural development. In particular, they should increase funding and support for viable rural livelihood diversification activities, as these can support disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

Migration and mobility

The peace agreement references the rights of displaced Colombians, including provisions for restoring their land rights, granting land to displaced persons and encouraging voluntary return.18 The agreement recognizes the need to address structural inequalities and the specific vulnerabilities of populations displaced by conflict. 19 However, conflict and violence continue to cause displacement, often resulting in rural-

- ⁹ Smith, Olosky and Grosman Fernández (note 8).
- 10 ACAPS, 'Colombia: Confinements and mobility restriction in Chocó, Nariño and Arauca', Thematic report, 2 May 2024; and OCHA, 'Colombia—Humanitarian Response Plan for Community Priorities 2024–2025: Summary', Mar. 2024.
- ¹¹ Mobjörk, M., Krampe, F. and Tarif, K., 'Pathways of climate insecurity: Guidance for policymakers', SIPRI Policy Brief, Nov. 2020...
- ¹² See '1. Towards a new Colombian countryside: Comprehensive rural reform', Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed 24 Nov. 2016, Bogotá, Colombia.
- ¹³ OCHA (note 10); and Campuzano Ochoa, C. P. et al., 'Urban water in Colombia', IANAS and UNESCO, *Urban Water Challenges in the Americas* (IANAS: Montevideo, 2015). ¹⁴ Action Against Hunger and WFP, 'El Niño 2023–2024: Latin America and the
- Caribbean', 27 Mar. 2024; and WFP, 'HungerMap LIVE', accessed 12 June 2024.
- ¹⁵ Smith, Olosky and Grosman Fernández (note 8).
- ¹⁶ UN Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/267, 27 Mar. 2024.
- ¹⁷ Núñez, A. P. B. et al., 'Diverse farmer livelihoods increase resilience to climate variability in southern Colombia', Land Use Policy, vol. 131 (Aug. 2023); and Smith, Olosky and Grosman Fernández (note 8).
- ¹⁸ '1. Towards a new Colombian countryside: Comprehensive rural reform' (note 12).
- ¹⁹ '1. Towards a new Colombian countryside: Comprehensive rural reform' (note 12).
- ²⁰ IDMC, 'Country profile: Colombia', accessed 20 July 2022; and Wesche, P., 'Business actors and land restitution in the Colombian transition from armed conflict',

urban migration.²⁰ Climate change and extreme weather events also contribute to displacement.²¹ In 2023, extreme weather events displaced 343 000 people in Colombia.²²

Displacement significantly increases vulnerability and marginalization. The majority of Colombia's 6.9 million IDPs live in informal settlements near major urban areas, often characterized by high rates of poverty, violence and the presence of armed groups, which can result in repeated, or secondary, displacement.²³ These informal settlements present opportunities for organized criminal groups and NSAGs to recruit vulnerable displaced persons.²⁴ Moreover, such settlements are exposed to climate-related hazards and lack the resources or capacities to adapt and develop emergency planning.²⁵ In 2024, wildfires affected informal settlements and marginalized communities near the capital, Bogotá, burning houses to the ground.²⁶

Weak state governance in conflict-affected regions accentuates local climate vulnerabilities. Mobility restrictions imposed by NSAGs isolate communities living under their control and cut off their access to food, healthcare and basic services.²⁷ Imposed confinement particularly affects marginalized rural populations and, when compounded by climate-related hazards like flooding, it severely disrupts

humanitarian aid and access to essential services. ²⁸ This isolation, along with deteriorating living conditions due to climate stressors, forces many to migrate in search of better opportunities, further destabilizing communities and increasing the risk of violent conflict as displaced populations compete for scarce resources. ²⁹

Converging inequalities and vulnerabilities, conflict, displacement and climate change demonstrate that compound risks cannot be addressed in silos. To tackle these issues, relevant UN bodies and international partners should support the Colombian government in strengthening its capacity to address forced displacement and confinement. Special attention should be paid to strengthening resilience to climate shocks to prevent them from escalating into disasters, addressing inequality, and fostering better service delivery and social cohesion in host communities. Additionally, efforts should be made to protect vulnerable populations from exploitation during displacement.

Military and armed actors

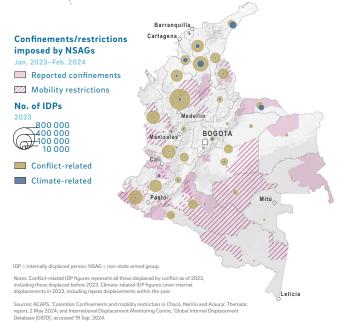
Research shows that armed actors can leverage a changing climate and environmental degradation to alter their tactics and advance strategic goals. ³⁰ In Colombia, environmental protection and environmental degradation are closely tied to the tactics of armed groups.

In areas under NSAG control, the appropriation of land, rivers and other resources accentuates people's vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change by limiting natural resource access and availability, which in turn affects livelihood security. 31 Armed groups participate in both legal and illegal economies, including cattle ranching and drug trafficking, which drive deforestation and aggravate vulnerabilities. 32 For example, they charge tariffs for buying and selling forested land, sometimes

- ney charge tariffs for buying and selling forested land, sometimes

 International Journal of Human Rights, vol. 25, no. 2 (2021); and Oxfam, Unearthed:
- Land, Power and Inequality in Latin America (Oxfam: Nov. 2016).
 IDMC, 'Country profile: Colombia', accessed 20 May 2024; and UNHCR, 'Colombia situation', accessed 21 May 2024.
- ²² IDMC (note 21).
- ²³ IDMC and NRC, Grid 2024: Global Report on Internal Displacement (IDMC: Geneva, May 2024); and UNHCR (note 21).
- ²⁴ ACAPS, 'Colombia: Child recruitment and use', Thematic report, 15 Apr. 2024.
- ²⁵ OCHA (note 10).
- ²⁶ Garzón, N. T., 'Ínformal settlements on the front lines of wildfire risk in Bogotá', NACLA, 5 Feb. 2024.
- ²⁷ ACAPS (note 10).
- ²⁸ ACAPS (note 10); and OCHA (note 10).
- ²⁹ Mobjörk, Krampe and Tarif (note 11).
- ³⁰ Mobjörk, Krampe and Tarif (note 11).
- ³¹ Delgado, C., The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace in Colombia (SIPRI: Stockholm, Dec. 2020).
- ³² International Crisis Group, 'Crimes against the climate: Violence and deforestation in the Amazon', 8 Dec. 2023; and Samper, J. and Krause, T., "We fight to the end": On the violence against social leaders and territorial defenders during the post-peace





incentivizing deforestation to increase coca cultivation and open new trafficking corridors. $^{\rm 33}$

Although deforestation rates briefly declined in 2023 due to sanctions and government efforts, they surged again in 2024, with NSAGs using deforestation as leverage in their peace negotiations with the government. As part of its Total Peace policy, the government has initiated negotiations with various armed groups, including a FARC splinter faction known as FARC—Central General Staff (FARC—EMC), where discussions have included environmental protection and highlighted the potential for constructive solutions. The 2016 peace agreement offers insights into how economic and social reintegration processes can provide opportunities for former combatants to participate in environmental protection and recovery, as well as demining efforts.

Armed groups continue to target environmental defenders in Colombia. In 2023, 181 social leaders were killed, placing Colombia among the highest countries globally for such killings.³⁷ The Escazú Agreement, adopted into national legislation in 2024, aims to protect environmental defenders, ensure access to environmental information, promote participation in decision making and safeguard justice in environmental matters.³⁸ By implementing the Escazú Agreement alongside the peace agreement, Colombia can improve environmental protection and address the grievances tied to land dispossession, resource use and illegal economies that often fuel conflict, thereby strengthening the peace process.³⁹

Political and economic exploitation and mismanagement

Colombia's decades-long conflict has resulted in the displacement of millions of people, leading to signficant land dispossession, particularly

- agreement period and its political ecological implications in the Putumayo, Colombia', World Development, vol. 177 (May 2024).
- 33 Price, A., 'Armed groups use deforestation as a bargaining chip in Colombia', Inside Climate News, 3 June 2024.
- ³⁴ International Crisis Group (note 32); Noriega, C., 'The secret to Colombia's drop in deforestation? Armed groups', Al Jazeera, 22 Aug. 2023; Ramírez, M. F. and Cárdenas, J. D., 'GameChangers 2023: A win against deforestation in the Amazon, for now', InSight Crime, 2 Jan. 2024; and Price (note 33).
- ³⁵ UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 'Constructive dialogue, protection of ex-combatants, vulnerable groups crucial to solidify peace in Colombia, Special Representative tells Security Council', SC/15437, 11 Oct. 2023.
- 36 '3.2.2.6. Identification of needs for the process of economic and social reincorporation', Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict (note 12).
- 37 International Crisis Group, 'A fight by other means: Keeping the peace with Colombia's FARC', Latin America Report no. 92, 30 Nov. 2021; and Colombian Ombudsman's Office, [During 2023, 181 social leaders and human rights defenders were murdered in Colombia], Press release, 9 Jan. 2024 (in Spanish).
- ³⁸ Global Witness, 'Standing firm: The land and environmental defenders on the frontlines of the climate crisis', 13 Sep. 2023.
- ³⁹ Salazar, A. et al., 'The ecology of peace: Preparing Colombia for new political and

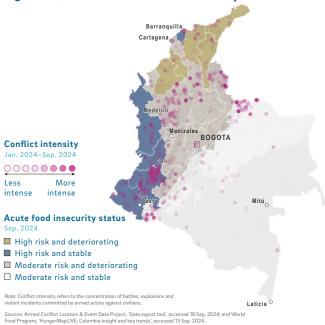
in regions occupied by marginalized communities. Displacement has allowed elites and armed groups to gain control of land, often in collaboration with state officials. 40 The peace agreement seeks to address land ownership issues through comprehensive rural reform and land restitution, and to correct historical injustices by redistributing land to marginalized and displaced farmers.⁴¹ This includes the creation of a land fund to redistribute millions of hectares and formalize land titles, promoting equitable land distribution and closing the rural-urban development gap. However, the implementation of these reforms has faced challenges due to competing claims to land, with business elites resisting restitution efforts.⁴²

Historical patterns of land grabbing have exacerbated these challenges, creating a contentious environment where marginalized and displaced communities are pitted against powerful economic interests.⁴³ These dynamics complicate efforts to achieve equitable land distribution and have environmental implications.44 Dispossession is also closely tied to the development of large-scale agro-industrial and mining projects, which fuel environmental degradation and accentuate climate vulnerabilities. For example, large-scale farming and extractive projects, such as cattle ranching, contributed to 45 per cent of deforestation in 2017.⁴⁵ The vested interests of elites and armed groups continue to pose a challenge to restitution efforts.4

The current government has prioritized land redistribution and restitution, but implementation has been slow due to a combination of security concerns related to NSAG-controlled land, the influence of elite and corporate interests, and judicial overload, among others.⁴⁷ It has also recommitted to transforming marginalized and conflict-affected regions through Development Programmes with a Territorial Focus, by funding local development programmes and seeking to enhance the participation of marginalized groups. 48 Ensuring meaningful participation and better coordination across government bodies is crucial to achieving its targets.⁴⁹ However, in some regions, development opportunities may be linked to extractive industries, which could exacerbate deforestation

- planetary climates', Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, vol. 16, no. 9 (2018). ⁴⁰ Fernandes-Tavares, T., Yagüe Blanco, J. L. and Pascual, C., 'Dispossessed lands and land-use change in the Colombian armed conflict: Exploring a link through a regional case study', Journal of Rural Studies, vol. 108 (May 2024).
- ⁴¹ Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict (note 12).
- ⁴² Hurtado-Hurtado, C., Ortiz-Miranda, D. and Arnalte-Alegre, E., 'Disentangling the paths of land grabbing in Colombia: The role of the state and legal mechanisms', Land Use Policy, vol. 137 (Feb. 2024).
- ⁴³ Hurtado-Hurtado, Ortiz-Miranda and Arnalte-Alegre (note 42).
- 45 Lema, S. and Kleffmann, J., 'Linking climate change and peacebuilding in Colombia through land access', Climate Diplomacy, 18 Sep. 2019.





and pose challenges to ecosystems and climate action.

Strengthening municipal governments, local councils and communitybased organizations is essential as communities continue to place a higher level of trust in local governance.⁵⁰ Local governments can play a vital role in advocating for communities during programme planning and ensuring that land reform efforts are effectively implemented. The Colombian government, together with its international and local partners, should ensure that development projects aimed at reducing marginalization and inequality and improving governance are climateinformed and conflict-sensitive, to avoid creating new vulnerabilities. Integrating climate, peace and security considerations into Colombia's nationally determined contribution and national adaptation plan could lead to more peace-positive and climate-sensitive development.

- ⁴⁶ Prieto-Rios, E., Soto Hoyos, J. F. and Pontón-Serra, J. P., 'Foreign concerns: The impact of international investment law on the ethnic-based land restitution programme in Colombia'. International Journal of Human Rights, vol. 27, no. 1 (2023): and Wesche (note 20).
- ⁴⁷ Fortoua, J. A., Johansson, S. L. and Muñoz Mora, J. C., 'Control, dispute, and concentration of land during civil war: Evidence from Colombia', International Interactions, vol. 49, no. 2 (2023).

 48 UN Security Council, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia', Report of the
- Secretary-General, S/2024/509, 27 June 2024.
- ⁴⁹ UN Security Council (note 48).
- ⁵⁰ Weintraub, M. et al., Introducing the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process', Journal of Peace Research, 2023.

Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheets are a joint product by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The information in this fact sheet does not necessarily reflect the views of these partners.

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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