

**Conflict and Climate Change:  
A Brief Bibliography of Academic and Journalistic Resources**

Compiled by Emily Brewer, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship  
For a Workshop at the Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference  
August 2019

Bahaug, Halvard. "Climate Changes Affect Conflict Dynamics." *Environmental Change and Security Podcast*. 4 May 2018.

- <https://player.fm/series/friday-podcasts-from-ecsp-and-mhi/halvard-buhaug-climate-changes-affect-conflict-dynamics-6MaLiqL49MOIOXtW>
- A 20-minute lecture in podcast form by Halvard Bahaug, Research Professor at the Peace Research Institute Oslo. By looking at conflicts in the world since 1950, Bahaug notes that conflicts are more likely in hotter and drier regions of the world but says that conclusions of cause cannot be drawn from this relationship. He discusses clearer evidence that climate change does affect the dynamics of conflict and notes areas where more research is needed.

Dhillon, Jaskiran. "What Standing Rock Teaches Us About Environmental Justice." *items: Insights from the Social Sciences*.

- <https://items.ssrc.org/just-environments/what-standing-rock-teaches-us-about-environmental-justice/>
- The author is an indigenous academic and organizer who argues that all environmental justice movements are necessarily indigenous justice movements. This perspective is important as we think about "conflict and climate change" because so much of the world's conflicts today and in the past are caused (at least in part) by ideologies of domination and colonization. To be serious about preventing war and violence, we must recognize that much of the work of settler-colonizers is unlearning the violence of domination, working in solidarity with indigenous people.
- Quote from the article "An accurate examination of the social and political causes of climate change requires a close look at the history of genocide, land dispossession, and concerted destruction of Indigenous societies and cultural practices that accompanies the irreversible damage wrought by environmental destruction."

Graham-Leigh, Elaine. "Why stopping wars is essential for stopping climate change." *Counterfire*. 22 March 2019.

- <https://www.counterfire.org/articles/opinion/20224-why-stopping-wars-is-essential-for-stopping-climate-change>
- Counterfire is a British socialist not-for-profit news outlet funded in large part by subscriptions of its members. This very short article outlines some of the greenhouse gas emissions caused by the US military and war as well as the direct environmental damage caused by war, especially since World War II.

Lee, James. "Climate Change and Conflict." *Environmental Stories - Lectures*. American University. 7 April 2009.

- <https://podcasts.apple.com/bz/podcast/climate-change-and-conflict/id438288355?i=1000094060588>
- James Lee is a professor in American University's School of International Service. He concludes that climate change is an exacerbating factor in conflicts but that conflicts are caused by a variety of factors. He also looks at predictions of what kinds of conflicts may happen and where

in the future because of climate change (i.e. conflict over water more likely to happen in equatorial areas; conflict over territory more likely to happen toward the poles as climate refugees seek more habitable places to live and may come into conflict with societies already in those places). Finally, he looks possible solutions.

Ryan, Devon. "Stanford-led study investigates how much climate change affects the risk of armed conflict." Stanford News. 12 June, 2019.

- <https://news.stanford.edu/2019/06/12/climate-change-cause-armed-conflict/>
- This article summarizes recent findings of a study led by experts from various disciplines. The study asserts that climate change will increasingly affect organized armed conflicts and agrees that the causes of armed conflict depend on a variety of factors, one of which may be climate change in some conflicts. The article includes a link to a video where some of the researchers talk about their findings.

Sanders, Barry. *The Green Zone: The Environmental Costs of Militarism*. AK Press, 2009.

- This book is a decade old, so many of the numbers, estimates, and statistics are out of date, but it is one of the best looks at the ways that the US military and militarism contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental destruction. Although the US is not required to count emissions from the military in its overall emissions reporting (per the Kyoto Protocol), Sanders provides shocking estimates of what some of those numbers are. Sanders takes a look at specific instances of US military intervention and their impacts.

Werrell, Caitlin E. and Francesco Femia. "Climate change raises conflict concerns." *The UNESCO Courier*. 2018-2.

- <https://en.unesco.org/courier/2018-2/climate-change-raises-conflict-concerns>
- This article was written by the presidents of Center for Climate and Security, a non-partisan DC-based policy organization. This article looks at specific patterns of climate change and conflict in the Horn of Africa and outlines specific ways that climate change contributes to conflict and potential conflict there. This article is useful in the way that it looks at one place specifically but the overall dynamics and patterns may be applicable in other regions of the world as well.

*As you can see, this bibliography lists resources that are primarily created by white European men in academia or with high levels of formal education. They are not the only experts by any means on the connections between conflict and climate change. That is why it is so important that, if you only read one of these resources, read the article by Dhillon. While most of the academics of European descent argue that climate change will cause and exacerbate conflicts in the future, Dhillon's argument is that climate change is caused by the violence of colonization in the past and present. These two perspectives complement each other, but we cannot have only the perspective that climate change will create more armed conflict in the future.*

*If you have other good resources, please send them on with a description of what you think is good about them! I'm also working on including writings and stories of people from outside academia who argue from research and/or experience that conflict and climate change are related.  
(emily@presbypeacefellowship.org)*