

# Environmental Security

Exploring environmental threats with the potential to undermine security

The Stimson Center's Environmental Security program explores the suite of environmental threats, both human and natural, that have the potential to undermine national, regional, or global security. The increasingly complex and transnational drivers of environmental challenges compromise ecological, economic, and food security and ultimately foster destabilization and exacerbate geopolitical tension.

## THE CLIMATE CRISIS AS SECURITY RISK

Environmental degradation, the climate crisis, and collapsing fish stocks threaten the security of individuals, communities and states around the world. Roughly 1.3 billion people rely on the ocean for their primary source of protein, yet 90 percent of the world's fisheries are either fully exploited or over-fished. Distant water fishing fleets scour the ocean, contributing to poor fisheries management, and exhausting vital fisheries resources. As fisheries collapse, the livelihoods and food security of fishermen are put at risk, increasing their vulnerability to traffickers and the risk that they will engage in illicit activity.

Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing generates an estimated annual profit of up to \$36 billion, little of which is invested back into the coastal states or regions where this illegal fishing takes place. At the same time, life below the water is drastically being altered by climate change: coral reefs are dying, fisheries are shifting their range, and vital habitats can no longer support the life they once did.

On land, the effects of climate change are causing drought, flooding, heat waves, and resource scarcity, all of which is eroding livelihoods and increasing the risk of instability for those most at risk. Food and economic insecurity, expanding desertification and changing marine ecosystems strain marginalized communities least able to adapt to this changing environment. This is also leading to accelerated migration to urban centers, a majority of which are on the coast and are

## PROJECTS

**Climate Security** The Climate and Ocean Risk Vulnerability Index is a tool designed to help combat the impact of climate change by prioritizing action to reduce risk

## **Ocean Security and Sustainable Fisheries**

Protecting ocean assets and promoting transparency across the global fishing industry to safeguard the economic, health and food security of people who depend on our oceans

## LEADERSHIP

### **Sally Yozell**

Director



[Full bio →](#)

already experiencing the effects of climate change such as more intense coastal storms and sea level rise.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PRACTICAL POLICIES**

Our team produces research and analysis on the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. We work closely with stakeholders across governments, and the conservation, business, and security communities around the world to develop integrated and informed policy solutions. We use our research, analysis, and policy recommendations and identify opportunities to test their effectiveness – moving beyond report-writing to operationalize our ideas for real-world impact. We develop partnerships with private sector companies, governments, international policymakers, and civil society to formulate approaches that best address environmental security challenges.

The 21st century requires innovative solutions to address the climate crisis and Stimson’s Environmental Security Program is at the forefront of this research. Whether working to identify countries most at risk for instability and insecurity using an integrated analysis of climate change, migration, and resource scarcity or delving into the motivations and impacts of distant water fishing fleets and the need for greater transparency across the seafood supply chain, Stimson’s Environmental Security program works with unconventional stakeholders to develop unique solutions. By developing innovative tools at the intersection of environmental and security risk, the team inform policymakers on these pressing issues and then takes pragmatic steps to put those ideas into action.

## **Contact**

For more information about program activities, contact Sally Yozell at [syozell@stimson.org](mailto:syozell@stimson.org). To discuss supporting the program, contact Sarah Savoy at [ssavoy@stimson.org](mailto:ssavoy@stimson.org).

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