



# A Climate of Insecurity?

## Exploring the Nexus of Climate Change and National Security

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# Agenda



## Setting the Scene:

- The Climate Security Nexus



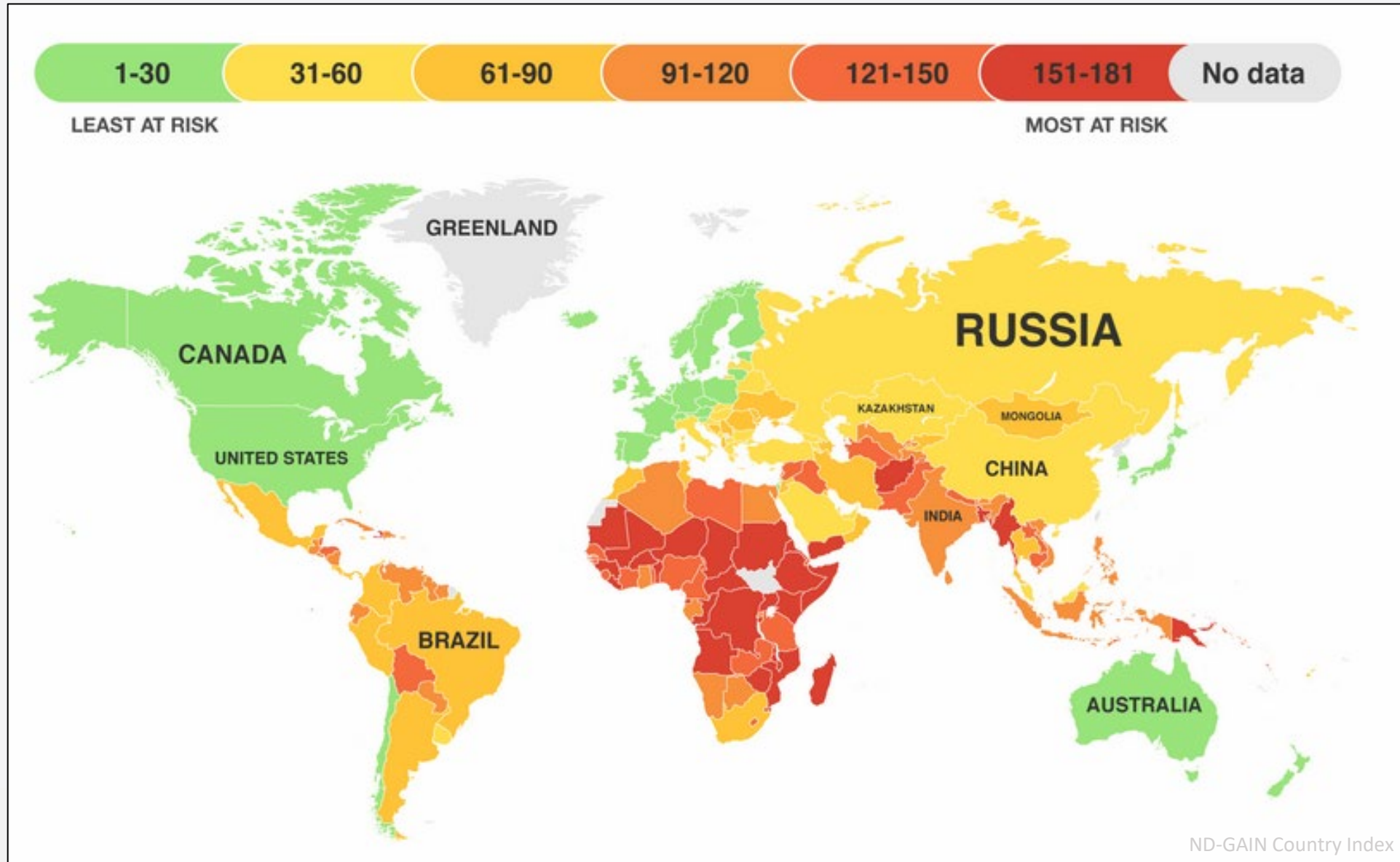
## Climate Change as an Indirect Contributor to Insecurity

- Climate change and geopolitics in Southeast Asia
- Climate change and violent extremism in the Sahel
- Climate change and citizen insecurity in the Caribbean



## Conclusion

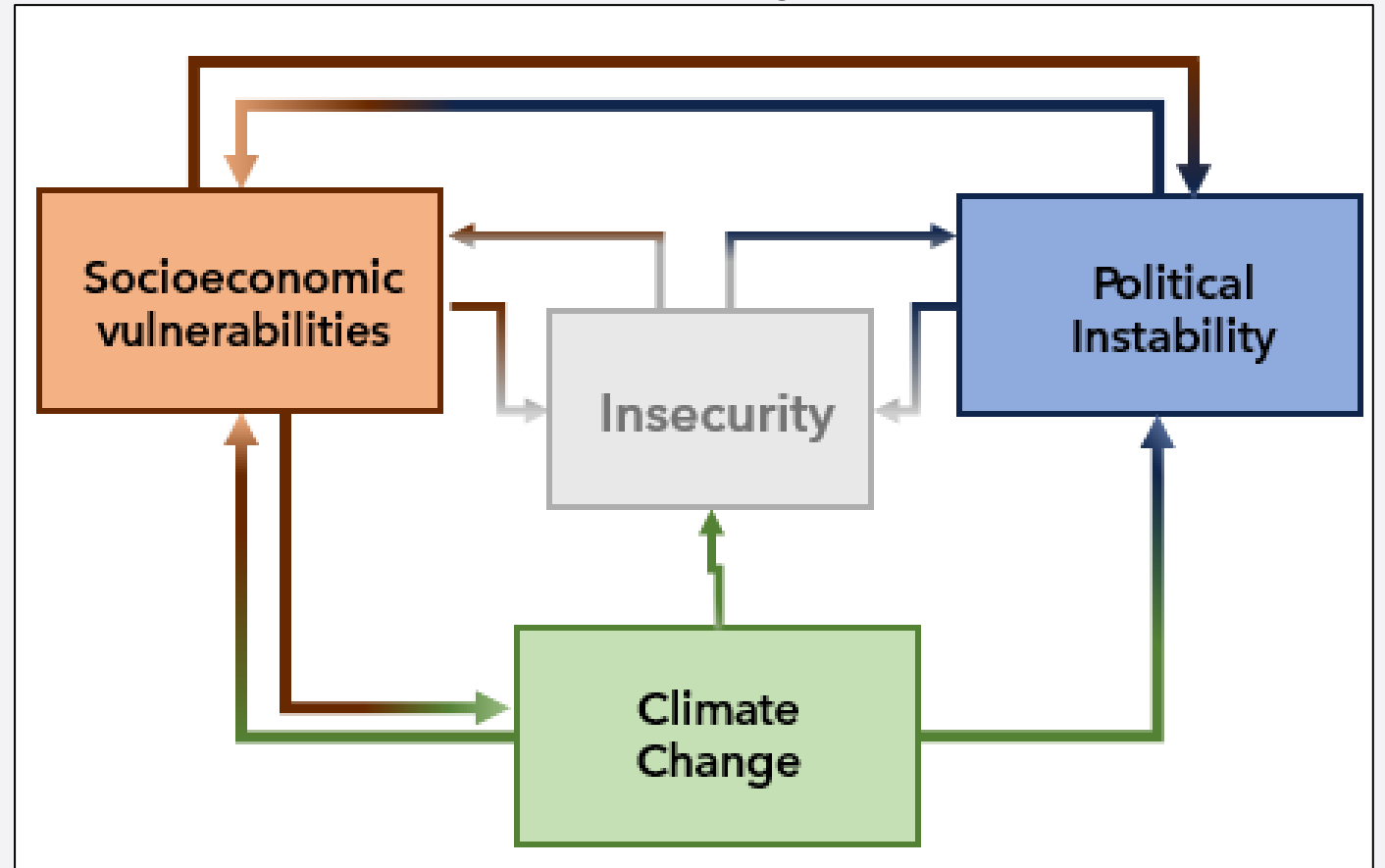
# Climate Change: A Global Challenge



# Climate Change as a “Threat Multiplier”

- Specific threats and their associated multiplication factors are highly debated and often ambiguously situated in the understanding of climate change-related security impacts.

Climate-Security Nexus



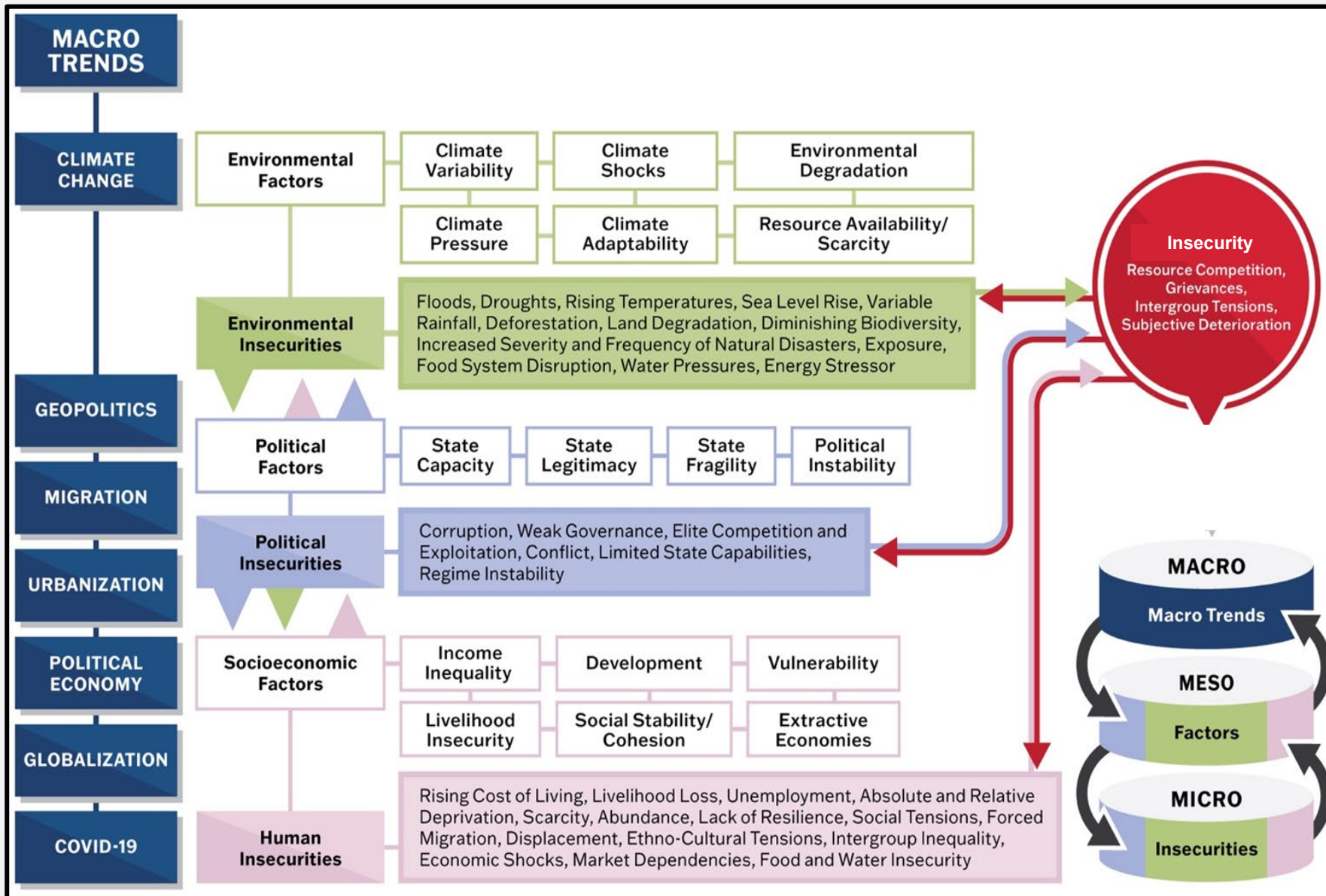
# Linking Climate Change & Security

## KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS:



1. What potential do climatic changes have to exacerbate existing tensions, disrupt geopolitical relationships, and create new threats to national, international, and human security in places experiencing these changes?
2. What second or third-order outcomes of climate change that affect security are likely to emerge?

# Climate-Security System



**Macro Trends:** Refers to pervasive and persistent global phenomena that act as forces of change impacting current environmental and human systems operations

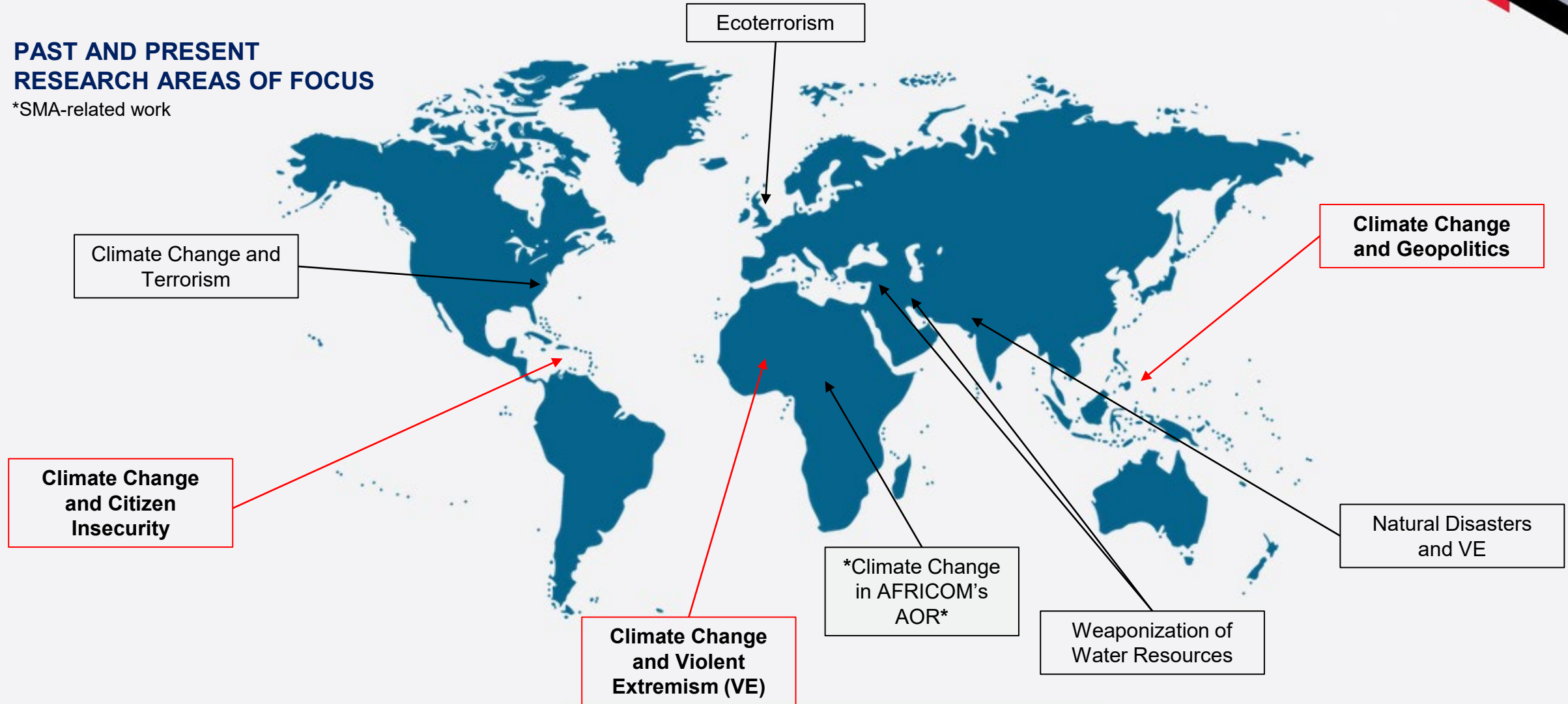
**Factors:** Refers to forces, processes, and phenomena that produce and shape, and are shaped by, connections between macro trends and insecurities of current environmental and human systems operations

**Insecurities:** Refers to forces, processes, and phenomena that threaten everyday life chances increasing vulnerabilities in current environmental and human systems operations.

# Linking Climate Change & Security

**PAST AND PRESENT RESEARCH AREAS OF FOCUS**

\*SMA-related work



# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia

1. A growing tension and perception of disunity exists between Southeast Asian states as varying levels of democratic backsliding shape ASEAN's regional integration.
2. Strategic competition has engendered a growing adversarial schism as the balance of power shifts among U.S., Chinese, and Southeast Asian states' strategic interests, stressing Southeast Asia's capacity to remain "neutral."
3. The increasing frequency and severity of climate change-related events in the region threaten to exacerbate political instability and resource insecurity, shaping the ways geopolitics impacts environmental policy and practice.





# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia



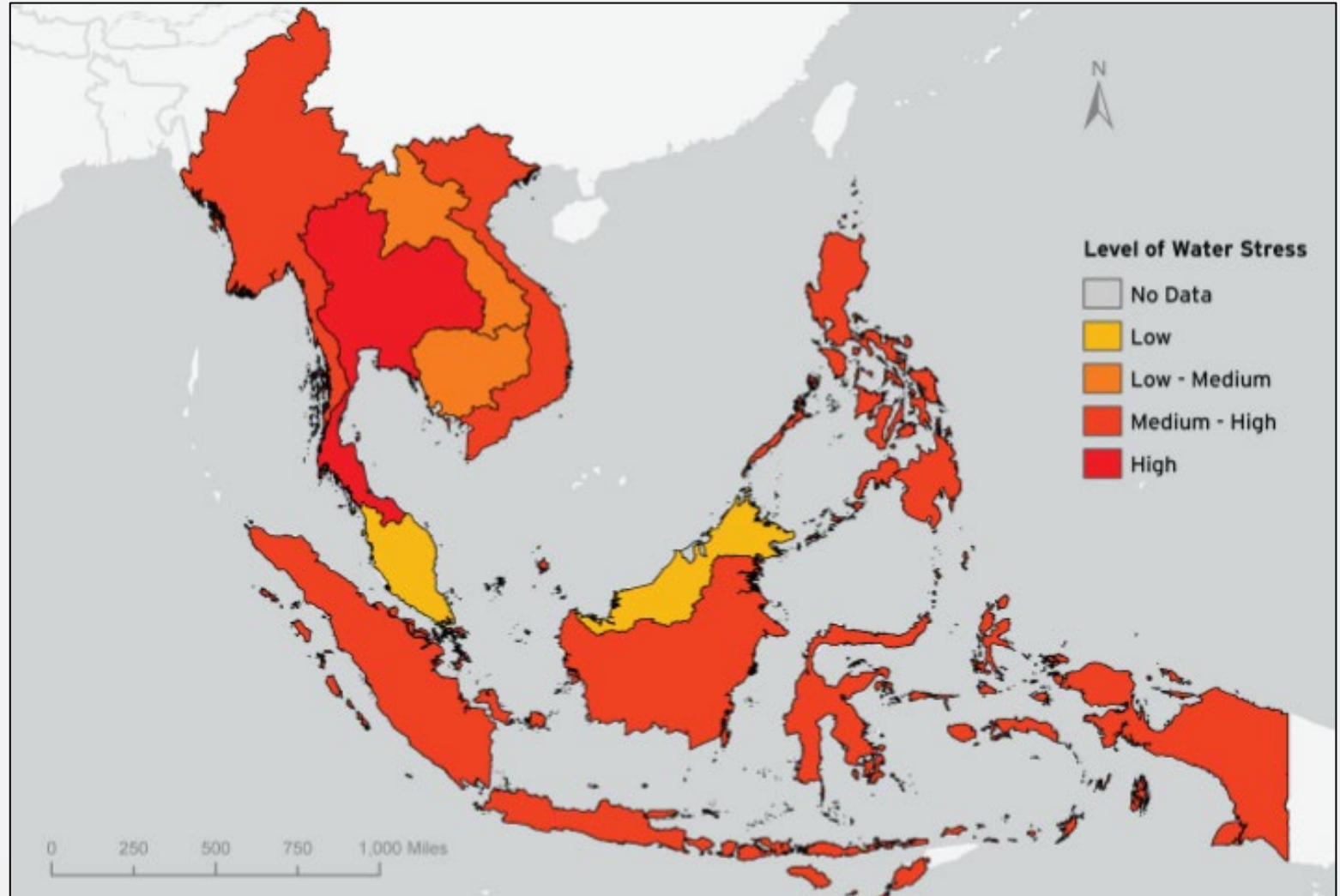
- In the most recent State of Southeast Asia Survey, “**climate change and more intense and frequent weather events**” is considered one of the region's top three challenges.
- There was a **20.1% increase** in respondents identifying climate change as a significant regional challenge from 2022 to 2023 (37% to 57.1%).

# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia

## WATER STRESS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Climate change-related water insecurity in the is driven by:

1. More frequent and longer extreme heat events and seasonal droughts
2. Coastal and delta flooding risks from accelerating sea level rise, intensifying storm flooding, and imposed unseasonal flooding from dam discharge.

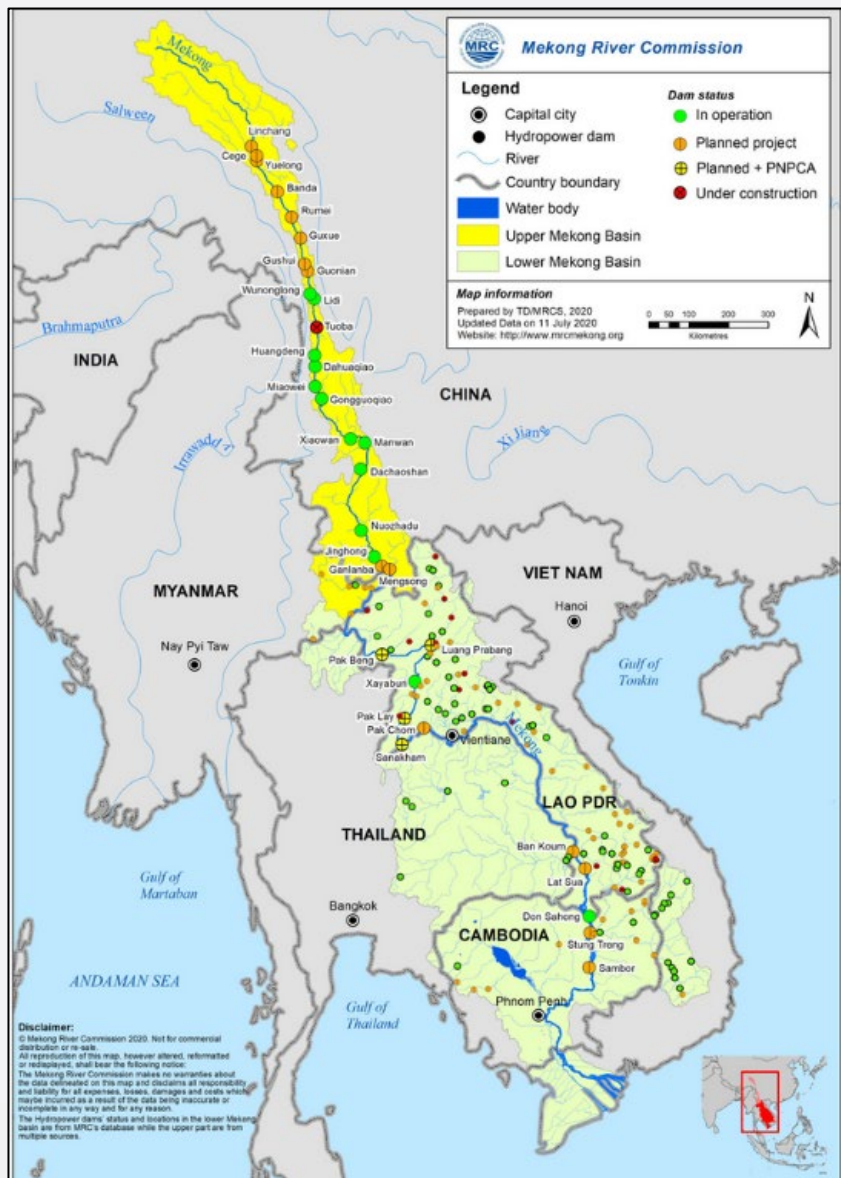


# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia

- As climate change's consequences grow more evident and severe in Southeast Asia, it is increasingly apparent that it will reshape geopolitical relations as well, especially with the PRC.
- The complexities of the Mekong's changing water regime are further complicated geopolitically as power asymmetries and policy fragmentation among downstream states.



# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia



- PRC dam building and water diversion have led to diplomatic tensions as countries downstream fear the negative environmental impacts and their exacerbation of political, economic, and social consequences.
- Fears frequently expressed downstream revolve around water shortages, flow alterations, sediment trapping, habitat destruction, and devastation of important agricultural areas and fisheries.

**OUTCOMES**

- Resource Competition
- Livelihood loss
- Grievances
- State fragility
- Inter-group tensions
- Destabilization
- Conflict
- GDP loss
- Human loss
- Adaptation
- Resilience
- Sustainability

**1 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Anthropogenic emissions
- Sea level rise
- Temperature rise
- Variable rainfall
- Deforestation

**4 THREAT / RISK MULTIPLIERS**

- Migration
- Urbanization
- Coping capacity
- Inequality
- Infrastructure
- Transboundary decision-making
- Scarcity

**ACTORS**

- Governments (ASEAN), Citizens, Military, Civil Society, Non-State Actors, Business, Foreign Governments, Communities



**2 ENVIRONMENTAL VULNERABILITIES**

- Flooding
- Landslides
- Tropical storms
- Extreme heat
- Droughts
- Exposure
- Land degradation

**3 THREAT / RISK**

- Water stress
- Food insecurity
- Energy insecurity
- Health hazards
- Loss of yields
- Displacement
- Salinity

**NON-CLIMATIC INSECURITIES**

- State capacity
- State legitimacy
- Instability
- Corruption
- Elite capture
- Regime stability
- Rising costs
- Social tension
- Economic shocks
- Development
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- History of conflict
- Strategic competition

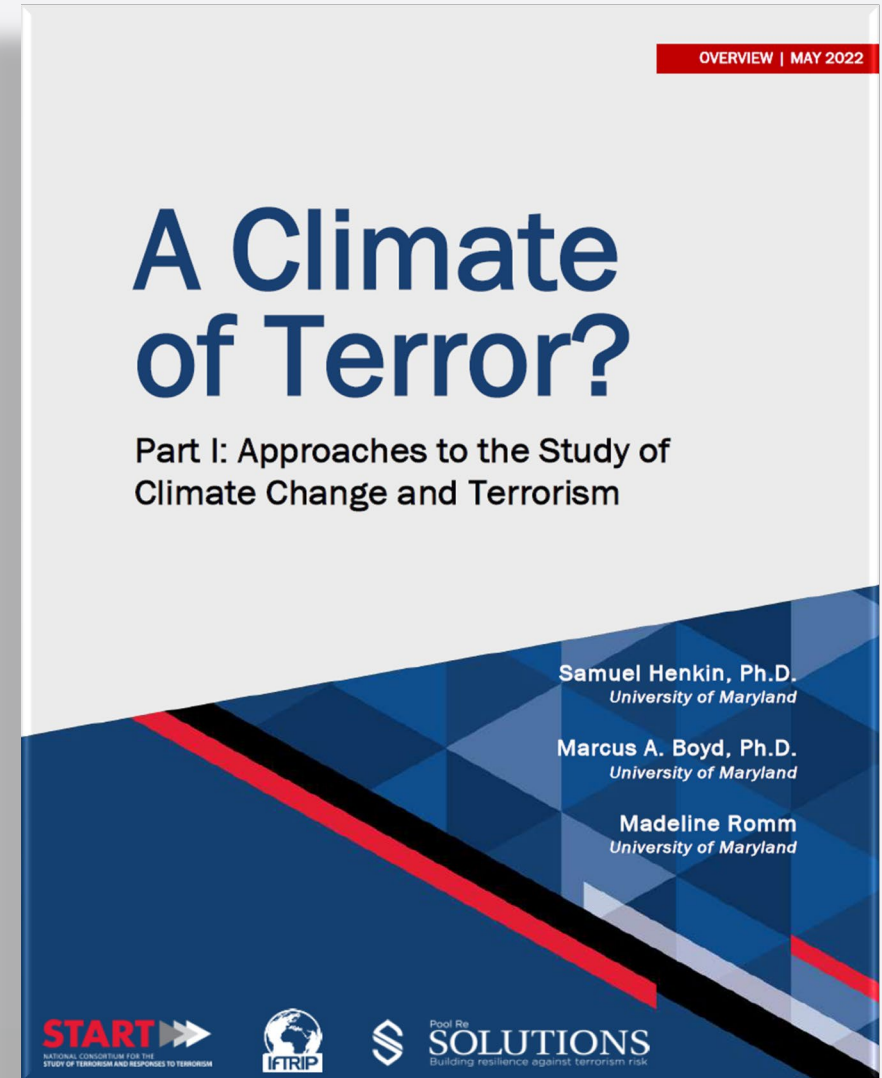


# Climate Change & Geopolitics in SE Asia

# Climate Change & Violent Extremism

## Mapping VE in the Climate-Security Nexus

- The uncertainties surrounding climate change and violent extremism offer significant analytical challenges, as linking climatic change to rare violent outcomes, like violent extremism, is a highly involved endeavor.



# Climate Change & Violent Extremism

01

## **PUSH FACTORS**

Overlap with structural root causes of terrorism that drive people toward resorting to violence.

02

## **PULL FACTORS**

Capture aspects that make extremist groups/lifestyles appealing to some.

03

## **PERSONAL FACTORS**

Specific individual characteristics that make individuals more vulnerable to extremist ideology

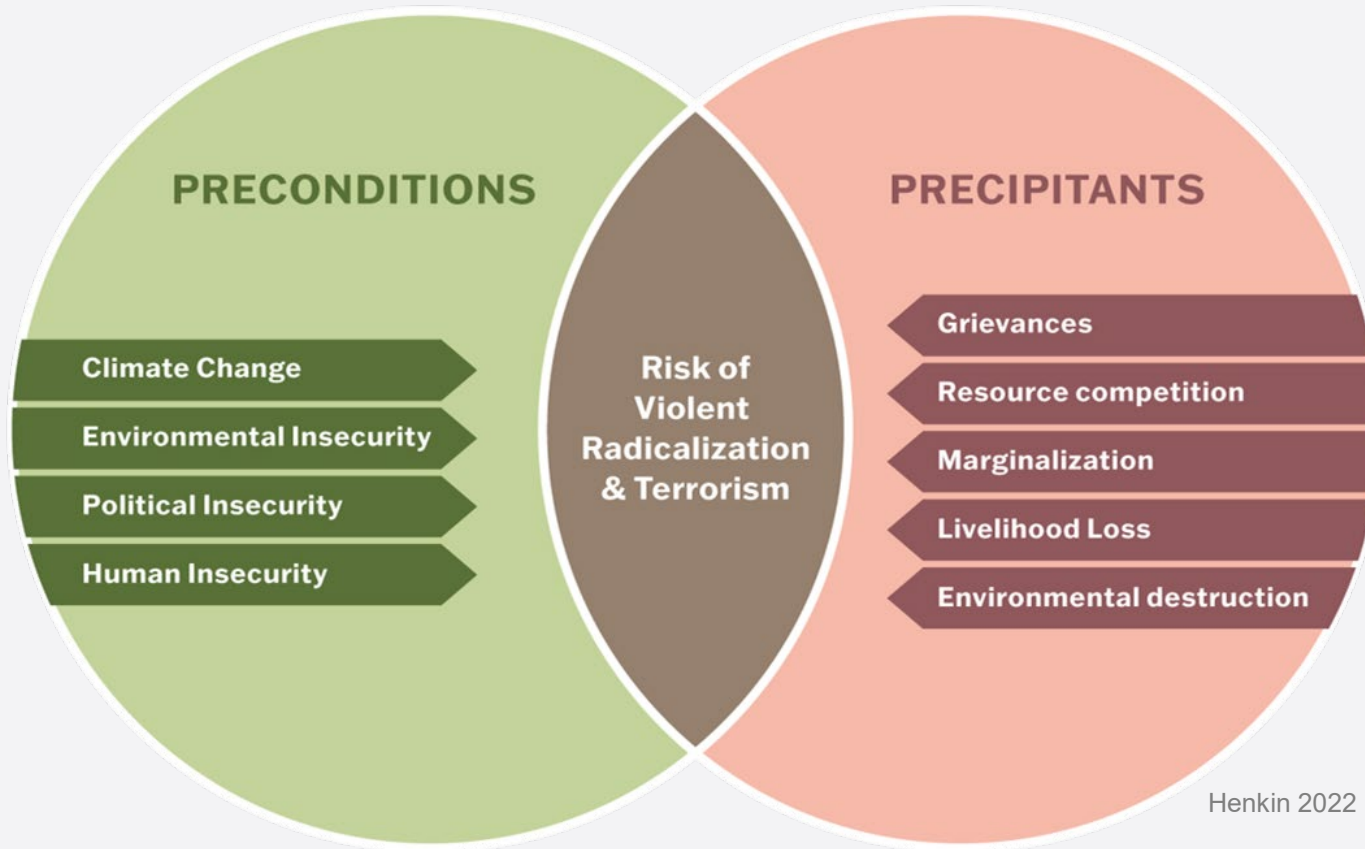
# Climate Change & Violent Extremism

## Violent Extremism Preconditions Precipitants





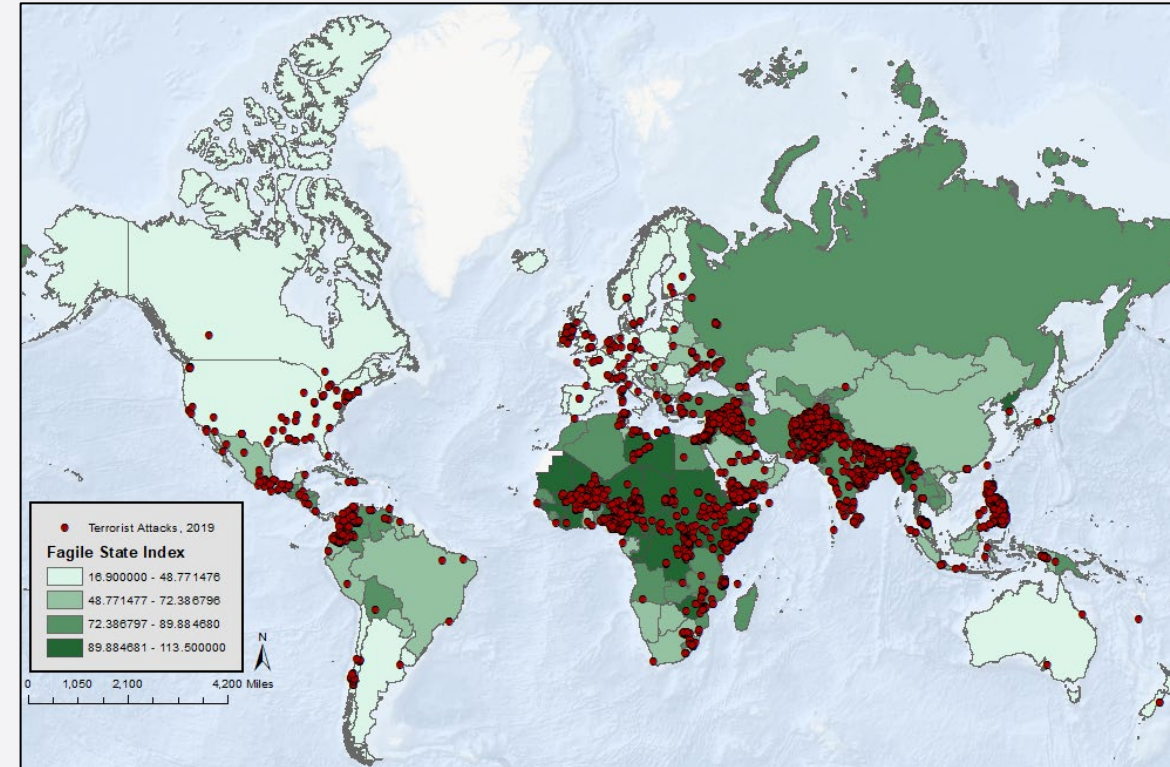
# Climate Change & Violent Extremism



- **Preconditions** are phenomena that tend to be structural in nature and enable a wide range of outcomes, of which violent extremism is only one.
- **Precipitants** are types of causes that more directly influence the emergence of violent extremism. Precipitants are commonly

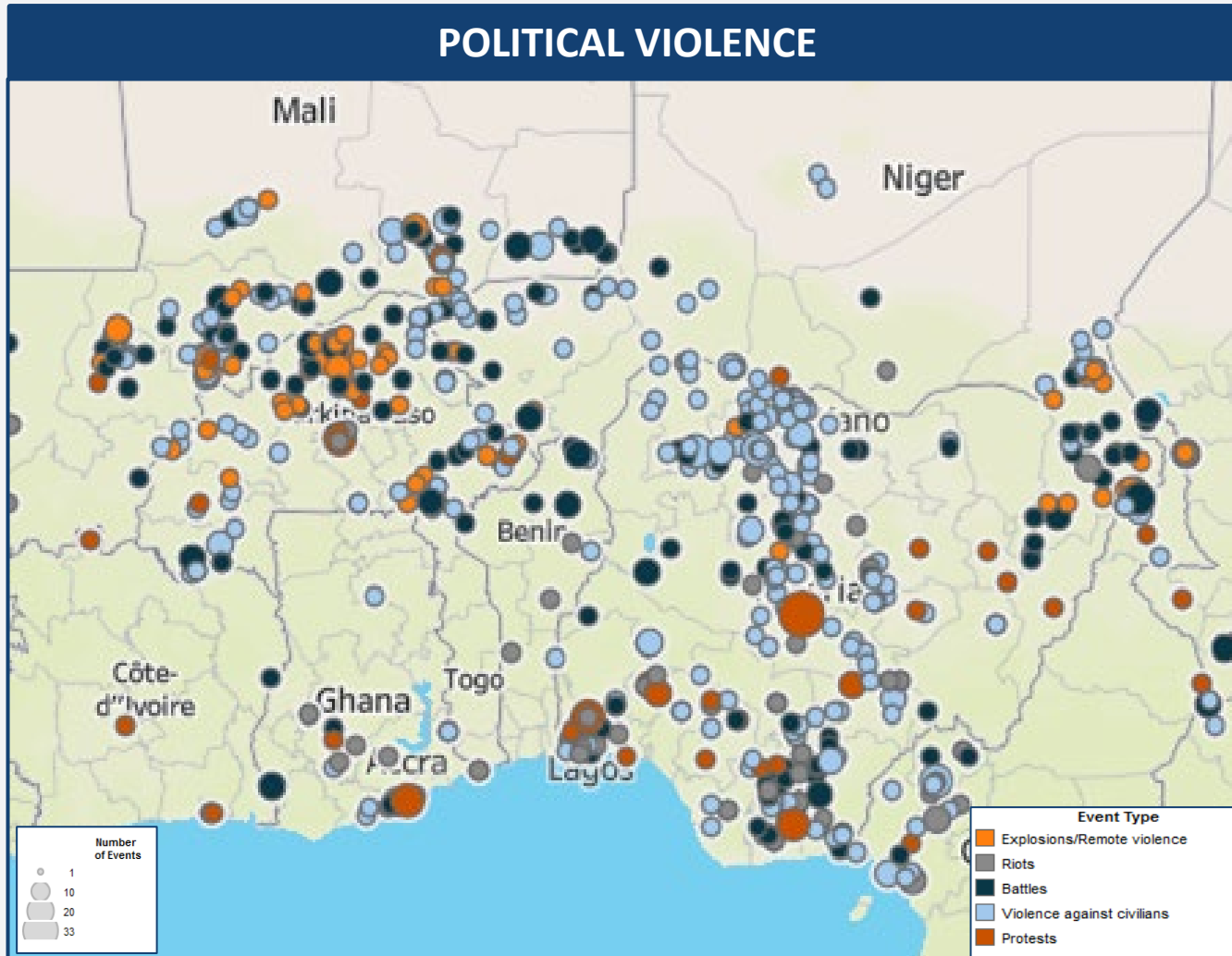
# How Climate Change Indirectly Contributes to Violent Extremism?

- 1. Exacerbate the underlying conditions** necessary for violent extremism to develop (i.e., the “root causes”)
- 2. Multiply the drivers of radicalization** that can facilitate the emergence of violent extremism (i.e., push, pull, and personal factors)
- 3. Multiply and intensify the number of enabling factors** that can lead to surges in local conflict and political violence, including acts of violent extremism (i.e., political instability, weak governance, livelihood disruption)
- 4. Facilitate the opportunity** for VEOs to exploit climate change impacts as a means to exert influence over populations.



Map data integrates The Fund for Peace's Fragile State Index (FSI) and START's Global Terrorism Database (GTD)

# Climate Change & VE in the Sahel



- Western Sahel offers an exemplary case to understand better how climate change contributes to violent extremism.
- Sahelian states are simultaneously among the most affected by climate change and the least prepared to adapt and have faced a rapid growth of violent conflict and extremism.

# Citizen Security & Climate Change

## USAID's Working Definition of Citizen Security

- “Citizen security is the protection of core basic rights, including the right to life, respect for the physical integrity and material of the person, and the right to a dignified life” (USAID, 2020).
- It focuses on people's welfare and posits that public safety is an essential requirement for human development.



St. Georges, Grenada, Jan. 2024

# Citizen Security & Climate Change

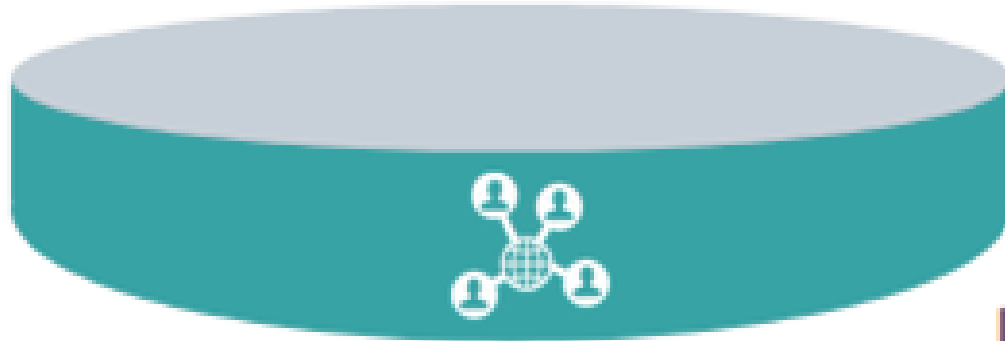


What does it mean to introduce *climate sensitivity* to violence prevention?

1. Risk Assessment & Vulnerability Reduction
2. Prevention, Intervention, and Social Re-Integration Activities

# Citizen Security & Climate Change

## Level of Analysis for Risk Assessment



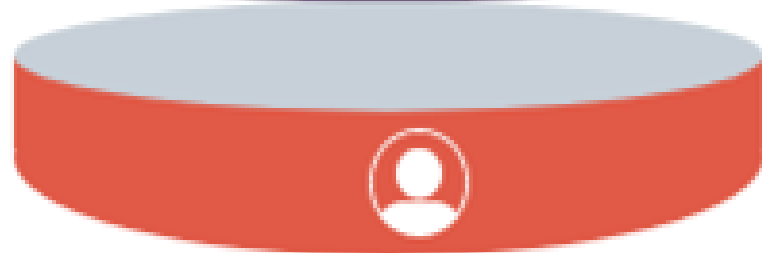
### MACRO

Includes the roles of government, society (e.g., public opinion, socioeconomic opportunities, and global governance, among other elements).



### MESO

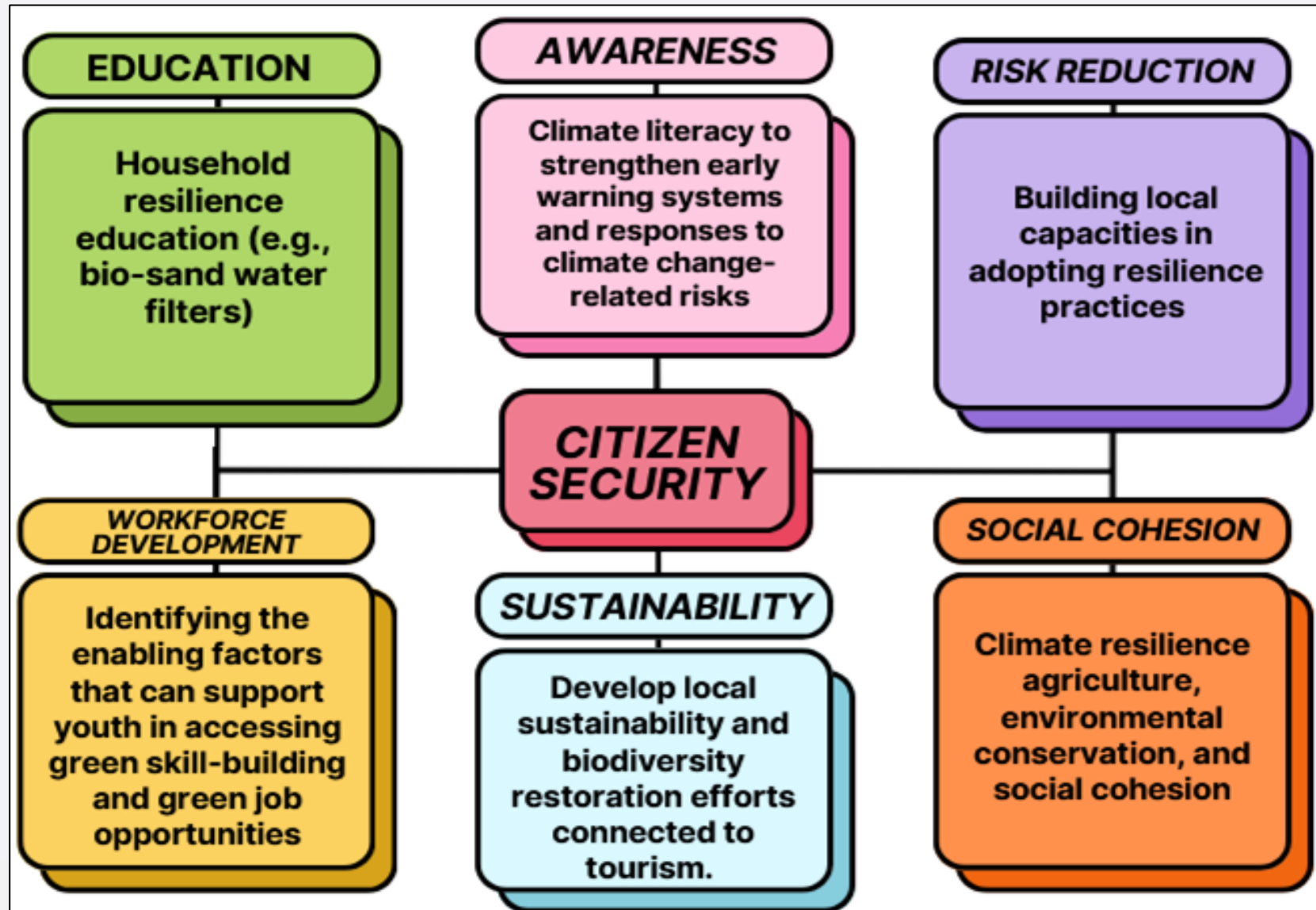
Includes communities and groups and relates to the supportive social surroundings or broader social environment



### MICRO

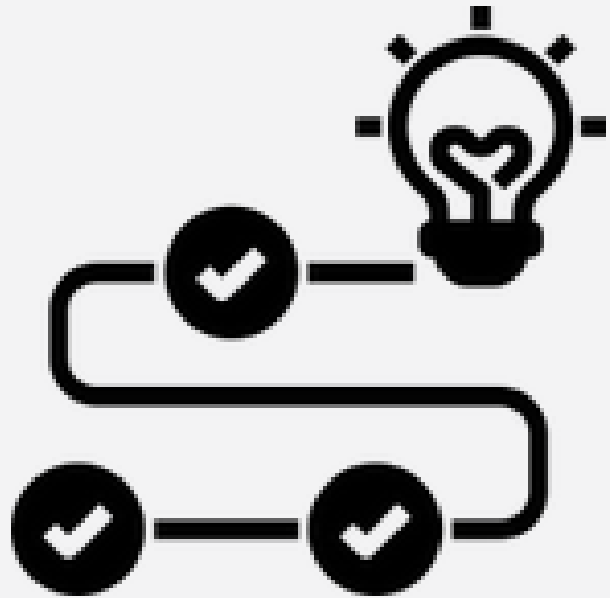
Corresponds to the individual person and involves feelings of alienation, marginalization, discrimination, relative deprivation, humiliation, and rejection among others

# Citizen Security & Climate Change



Prevention,  
Intervention, and  
Social  
Reintegration  
Activities

# Citizen Security & Climate Change



Participants learned that the “**change**” of climate change is more than environmental degradation or intensifying weather patterns.

**It is a fundamental change in where and how people live, economic systems, and the balance of geopolitical power.**



# Conclusion



**Experts in climate change need to understand how climate impacts can influence power dynamics and worsen environmental, political, and socioeconomic vulnerability, while security experts must grasp the impacts of climate change and how it will reshape operational environments.**



# Thank You!

**Please feel free to reach out:  
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