Panel 4.24

16:15 - 17:45 Monday, 29th June, 2026
Room Sutherland · L226
Theme Climate, Environment & Sustainability
Presentation type Parallel Session

Reimagining Security in Times of Climate Change in a Fractured World [Hybrid]

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280 Reimagining Security in Times of Climate Change in a Fractured World

Description

Climate change is a “perfect moral storm” (Gardiner), not in the least because it creates global conceptual challenges. Traditional ways of conceptualising ethics, politics and the law have trouble coping with the unique kind and scale of the problem. One symptom of this is climate change generating multifaceted dangers that strain existing security frameworks.

This panel interrogates how the law’s reaction to climate change is characterised by the need to reconceptualise and reimagine national and international approaches to security. Well established practices need to be reevaluated, new doctrines and approaches are to be developed and critically considered as to their necessity and impact. Together, the panel’s presentations map the evolving interface between climate governance and security law, charting ways to reimagine legal tools and institutional design capable of addressing climate-related harms while upholding rights, legitimacy, and accountability.

The panel’s contributions include an analysis of climate-related risks and their gendered impacts, advancing a rights-based approach to avoid structural discrimination and enhance inclusive outcomes; an examination of UN climate-law obligations and the transferability of customary law to UN peacekeeping operations; and a critique of the securitization of climate change, assessing how security-based governance shapes climate-law obligations amid geopolitical paralysis.

2619 Chair

Lorenz Handstanger
University of Vienna, Austria

2780 UN Peacekeeping in the Anthropocene: Climate-Law Obligations of International Organizations

Haris Huremagic, Salman Khan
Bundeswehr University Munich, Germany

Abstract

United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKOs) have long symbolized the multilateral peace order established after 1945. Since the first mission, however, their mandate has changed significantly and their objective is no longer merely to secure a military ceasefire, but to contribute to sustainable peace.

Climate change has emerged as a new security risk and places additional demands on PKOs, for example, protecting civilians in the wake of climate-related natural disasters. This raises the question whether the relevant legal frameworks have kept pace with the evolving security environment. While the International Court of Justice, in its recent advisory opinion on climate change, characterized climate change as an “urgent and existential” threat and emphasized a duty of global cooperation, it remains unclear whether, and to what extent, international organizations (IOs) are bound by this developing body of international climate law.

According to the prevailing view, IOs are bound by customary international law insofar as the relevant obligations can be “transferred” to the organization’s functions. How does this apply to the corpus of international climate law? Can it

be transferred to UN PKOs as a whole, oronly in specific areas, such as climate-relevant interpretations of human rights? Does it include only negative duties (e.g., refraining from climate-harming conduct) or also positive duties (e.g., conducting environmental impact assessments)? This presentation addresses these questions, which are crucial for ensuring that PKOs remain effective and future-proof in a changing global security order.

2536 UN Peacekeeping in the Anthropocene: Climate-Law Obligations of International Organizations

Salman Khan, Haris Huremagic
University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Germany

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2151 Climate Security Risk and Its Implications for Women’s Human Rights in a Fractured World

Atieh Khatibi
The Research Center for Climate Law (ClimLaw:Graz), Austria

Abstract

Climate change is increasingly recognised as a “threat multiplier,” intensifying existing vulnerabilities and exacerbating socio-political and economic insecurities, thereby posing risks to peace and human security. The concept of climate-related security risks has evolved to emphasise pathways driven by climate change—including, but not limited to, local resource competition, livelihood insecurity, and migration—that threaten the peace and security of individuals, communities, and states. These climate security risks are not gender-neutral; women are disproportionately affected due to structural inequalities and unequal access to

resources and decision-making processes. For instance, declining agricultural productivity, drought and resource scarcity hinder women's economic security and increase unpaid care burdens, particularly in fragile and climate-vulnerable settings. In addition, climate-induced displacements increase the risk of exposure to gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and jeopardise the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, including the rights to food, water, health, livelihood, adequate housing, and participation. This paper aims to explore climate security and women's rights from a human security perspective to identify pathways through which climate security can lead to human rights violations. It argues that overlooking the gendered implications of climate security and their impact on women's rights in climate responses and policies reinforces structural discrimination. Addressing climate security without prioritising women's rights reduces the effectiveness and fairness of climate governance and undermines sustainable human security outcomes. Therefore, recognising the implications of climate security for women's rights and adopting a human rights-based approach to climate policy can promote the development of inclusive and peaceful climate governance frameworks.

2122 Securitizing Climate Change: Risks and Possibilities for International Law (Virtual)

Jane Hofbauer
University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Germany

Abstract

Beyond its environmental dimensions, climate change has increasingly been framed as a non-traditional threat to international peace and stability. The 'securitization' of climate change is closely tied to its characterization as an 'existential problem' (ICJ [2025] §456) and serves to justify extraordinary regulatory and institutional responses.[1] While such framing may mobilize attention and resources, it also entails significant risks, including the marginalization of cooperation grounded in solidarity and CBDR, the obscuring of historical responsibility for climate harm, and the reproduction of asymmetrical power relations through technocratic or even militarized interventions. However, from the perspective of international security, disregarding climate change as a conflict driver equally risks perpetuating structural inequalities, insofar as those most affected are often populations that have 'been on the wrong end of colonial history […] or who have suffered neglect, exclusion or simple rapacity at the hands of their own governments.'[2] In any event, recourse to military responses in the name of 'climate security' remains highly contested, and traditional instruments of conflict prevention, particularly within the UN security architecture, are increasingly constrained by political polarization and institutional paralysis.

Against this background, this paper examines how the securitization of climate change reshapes the content of obligations under international climate law. It explores the normative possibilities and limits of security-based approaches to climate governance under international law.

[1] Buzan/Wæver/de Wilde, *Security – A New Framework for Analysis* (1998) 23-24.

[2] Humphreys, 'Climate Justice: The Claim of the Past' (2014) 5 JHRE 134, 138.