Climate Security Language in UN Peace Operation's Mandates

Anne Funnemark, Asha Ali and Elisabeth Rosvold

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Climate security language linked to concrete actions is more prevalent than general language acknowledging the problem. Nevertheless, most of this language is in the preambular paragraphs and to facilitate missions' abilities to respond, the language should be integrated into the operational part of mandates.
- While most climate security language included since 2018 appears to be retained in new mandate resolutions, some language has later dropped out, illustrating that active penholders are important to keep language in mandates.
- Language addressing climate change as a peacebuilding component in mandates should be accompanied by concrete actions to strengthen such work within missions.

Introduction

Article 24 of the United Nations Charter confers the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This task requires a comprehensive engagement with the complex systems driving conflict in the world to understand and respond to threats to international peace and security. The UNSC has over the last 30 years gradually adopted a non-traditional security approach by incorporating economic, social, humanitarian and ecological instability as threats to international peace and security.

Since climate security first appeared on the UNSC agenda in 2007, the Council has played an important role in discussions about climate change and its potential consequences for peace and security through a series of meetings, debates and presidential statements. While climate security is still a contested term among UNSC members, climate change issues have also been raised

in debates on food security and peace operations in the Council. Some member states have argued that the issues are better addressed by other UN bodies since they relate more to development issues than international peace and security.

In this policy brief we adopt a broad understanding of climate security as interactions between climate change, conflict dynamics and peace and security risks, and analyse how language on climate-related security risks has been incorporated into UN peace operations' mandates over time. Despite the differing opinions in the UNSC, member states are increasingly considering the implications of climate change in their work; climate-related language has been included in the mandates of 14 different missions since the drought in Somalia was mentioned in UNOSOM II's mandate in 1993. There has been a substantial increase in climate security language in mandates over the last 20 years, and particularly in the mandates of the missions operating in the most climate-vulnerable contexts. Moreover, climate mitigation and opportunities for peacebuilding related to climate adaptation and mitigation are also considered relevant for missions, testifying to a wider understanding of climate-related peace and security.

Analysing UNSC resolutions

To identify and analyse the climate-related security language, we have gone through all UNSC resolutions concerning peace operation (PO) mandates between 1948 and 2022. The relevant mandates were grouped into three categories (shown in Table 1) reflecting the comprehensiveness of their climate security language. The first category simply reflects the presence of a climate-related word or phrase in the mandate. We then proceeded to determine whether this word or phrase was specifically connected to security, and if so, placed the mandate in the second category. Finally, if the identified link between climate change and security also prompted specific calls for action, the language was placed in the third category. We find that 14 missions have mandates that are coded at either 1, 2 or 3. There are 25 occurrences of language in category 3, spread across the mandates of seven peace operations (MINUJUSTH, MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNAMI, UNMISS and UNSOM).

Of these seven missions, six are still operating in 2022. Seven mandates are coded in category 2, five related to MINUSTAH and one each to MINUJUSTH and UNMEE. Thirty-four mandates, across eight missions, are in category 1. Twenty-three resolutions concerning the MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNAMID mandates stress the importance of reducing the missions' environmental footprint. Eleven resolutions also highlight the role climate change can play in the peacebuilding efforts of UNAMI and UNFICYP.

Increased occurrence and scope of climate security language since the early 2000s

Figure 1 shows the development over time of the climate security language in all mission mandates. Overall, the figure shows an upwards trend – there appears to be a gradual integration and strengthening of climate security language in the mandates over time. The first time climate impacts are linked to security (category 2) is in 2003 in the UNMEE mandate concerning a devastating drought in Ethiopia and Eritrea. This is much earlier than the second, which comes ten years later, in 2013, and concerned disasters in Haiti. Nonetheless, while not explicitly mentioning climate change, the fact that the drought was already linked to the peace process in 2003 showcases an awareness of the links between climate change-related disasters and security notably earlier than the issue is widely perceived to have come to the attention of the Security Council. The first debates on the links between climate change and security in the Council took place in 2007.

Despite this, it is only in 2018–2019 that we see a noticeable rise in the number of mandates containing language that specifically links climate change and security (categories 2 and 3). In these two years, mandates for MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNSOM are all in category 3, with UNMISS and UNAMI following suit in 2020 and 2021 respectively. The climate security language in this period is similar across mandates, and all include language along the lines of "recognizing the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, and natural disasters, among other factors, on the humanitarian situation and stability" in said country, whilst calling for, among other things, risk assessments, risk management strate-

| 0	1	2	3	
No mention of climate (change) in mandate text	*Mentions climate change impact* using one of the following words: Climate Climate change Environment Drought Flood Landslide Disaster Water	*Climate change impact is linked to security*	The resolution encourages or decides that *specific action* is to be taken concerning the impact of climate change on stability/security	*Table 1. Overview of climate security language classifications*
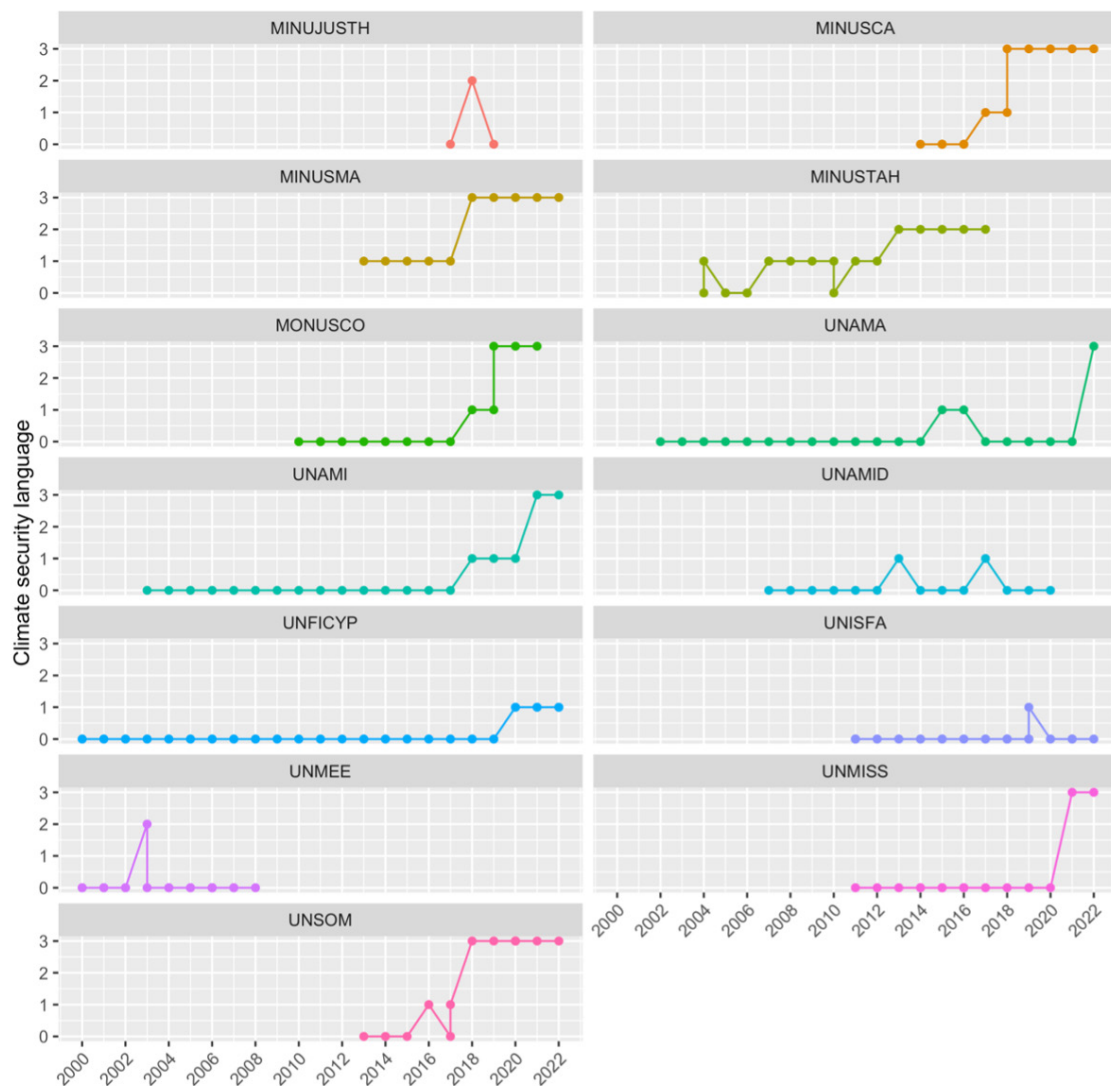
Figure 1. Overview of climate security language across UN peace operations' mandates, 2000–2022

While the role of climate change and climate-related peace and security remains contested in the Council, Figure 1 shows that the language that is included is often of a substantial character, and once a link is made between climate impacts and security it is often followed by calls for specific action to be taken. That there are many more mandate resolutions in category 3 than 2 may suggest that the challenge of including concrete language on how climate security risks should be integrated into peace operation programming may make the relevance of including it in the first place more evident. Relevant here is the fact that all the mandate resolutions in category 3 explicitly mention "climate change", while the mandate resolutions coded 2 only mention climate change-related phenomena such as drought rather than climate change explicitly.

Among all mandates that mention climate security (categories 2 and 3), only six (all in category 3) are in the operational part of the mandates, where the missions are specifically instructed to take action on the matter. This is the case for the four latest UNSOM mandates and for the latest UNMISS mandate. Both Somalia and South Sudan have recently had special climate security advisors appointed to work with their missions, illustrating that

Climate security language prevalent in mandates of missions operating in the countries most vulnerable to climate change

The map in Figure 2 shows that climate security language is present in many mandates for the missions operating in the countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. This suggests that the inclusion of climate security language is driven by realities on the ground rather than high-level political differences. The figure also shows that for the majority of the missions operating in countries that are highly vulnerable to climate change, climate language in mandate resolutions is explicitly linked to security concerns (i.e. they are in category 2 or 3).

However, two exceptions are worth mentioning. Firstly, Chad and Liberia – both highly vulnerable to climate change according to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation (ND-GAIN) index – did not see any climate-related language in the mandate resolutions of the peace operations active there throughout the 2000s and 2010s. Second, the most recent mission in Sudan – also highly vulnerable to climate change – UNISFA, does not have any climate security language in its mandates beyond mentioning the devastating floods in 2019.

The controversy over climate security language could explain why climate security language is not present in the mandates for all peace operations in locations highly exposed to climate change. UNAMID provides an interesting example as the language (which is in category 1) concerns communal conflict over access to and management of resources such as water and land. While these conflicts are widely recognised to have been compounded by the severe impacts of climate change in the region, no explicit connection to climate change is made in the mandate resolutions.
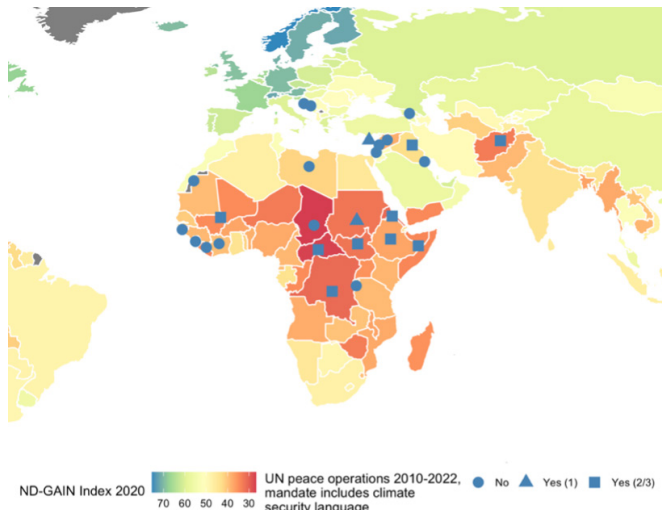
Figure 2. Climate vulnerability (ND-GAIN) and UN peace operations, 2010–2022

A wider understanding of climate-related peace and security

While the three categories presented above were decided pre-analysis, two additional categories were established during the coding process. First, mandates for MINUS-CA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNAMID specifically address the importance of keeping the environmental footprint of the missions themselves low. All references to environmental footprints are in the operational part of the resolutions where the Council specifically instructs missions. Second, in the UNAMI and UNFICYP mandates, cooperation over climate change is suggested to be integrated into the missions' peacebuilding efforts. Together, this language testifies to a broader understanding of the interrelated nature of peace operations, peacebuilding and climate change than the "hard security" focus where climate change is only a relevant concern for the Council if it increases violence and conflict.

Anne Funnemark is a Junior Research Fellow at NUPI. She is a part of the Climate-related Peace and Security Risks (CPSR) project and the MCDC Climsec project.

Asha Ali is a Junior Research Fellow in the Research group on Peace, Conflict and Development working on the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network and Africa-Nordic Multilateral Cooperation projects.

Elisabeth L. Rosvold is a Senior Research Fellow at NUPI in the Research group on peace, conflict and development, and works in the Climate-related Peace and Security Risks (CPSR) project.