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CLIMATE CHANGE: A MULTIPLIER FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITY

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Abstract – Over the past ten years, both understanding and awareness of the links between climate change and security have increased. However, those links are not simple and clear. The growing impacts of climate change do not automatically lead to more violence and conflict. Rather, climate change acts as a threat multiplier. The study addresses the question of how the impacts of climate change are a contributing factor in the rise and growth of terrorism and political violence in African regions. To explain the complexity of the problem, a system dynamics model structure is presented in the form of casual loop diagrams. The dynamic behavior in livelihood arises from negative impacts of climate change on livelihoods in many countries and regions through, e.g. water and land scarcity, food insecurity and migration. The affected population groups are becoming more vulnerable not only to negative climate developments but also to recruitments by violent groups such as Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Al-Shabaab or other militia. These terrorist groups can offer alternative livelihoods, economic motivations, and responses to possible political and economic dissatisfactions. This does not imply that there is a direct link between climate change and terrorists-related violence and conflict. However, environmental impacts and climatic change contributes to creating conditions in which these groups can thrive and facilitate the pursuit of their strategies. Further, violent groups are using natural resources as a weapon of war. In fragile environments, these groups can use water resources as a weapon or reduce access to natural resources. This development creates a dynamic for these groups, considering the fact that the scarcer resources become, the more power is given to those who controls them. Climate change will increasingly challenge the states' abilities to provide services and stability. In particular, extreme climate events can threaten the relationship between governments and populations. In such a case, a poor and slow government response could contribute to further instability, fragility, violence and strengthening of violent groups.

Keywords – *Climate change; contributing factor; growth of terrorism; poor government's response; causal loop diagrams; system dynamics*