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Climate Change Conflict: Warmer Temperatures Lead To Increased Violence, Study Says

By iScienceTimes Staff

Climate change and conflict around the globe are [linked](#), a new study in the journal [Science](#) finds.

By performing an [analysis](#) of 60 existing studies, drawn from fields such as climatology, economics and psychology, among others, researchers found that if global temperatures increase in the way many climatologists believe it will, "intergroup conflicts" like civil wars could increase as much as 50 percent by 2050, with interpersonal violence possibly increasing by eight to 16 percent.

In [studying](#) 27 modern societies, the climate change conflict researchers found that every one showed a link between higher temperatures and violence.

"We found that a one standard deviation shift towards hotter conditions causes the likelihood of personal violence to rise four percent and intergroup conflict to rise 14 percent," said study co-lead author Marshall Burke, of University of California, Berkeley, in a [press release](#).

The [60 studies](#) that the researchers looked at to draw their conclusions were wide-ranging, to put it mildly.

In one study from Phoenix, researchers stopped traffic on a sweltering day to see if drivers without air-conditioning were more likely to honk out of anger. In another study, researchers looked at whether Major League Baseball pitchers were more likely to hit batters on hotter days. In yet another diverse study, researchers analyzed sediment from the Middle East to determine what role desertification played 4,000 years ago in the fall of the Akkadian Empire.

In all of these study examples and more, researchers kept finding connections between climate and conflict.

"The result is alarming," [said](#) Burke. "However, if we get our act together and we mitigate future climate change...the effects will be much smaller."

The researchers did note that although the role of climate in increased violence is worth exploring, there are other factors in societies that lead to conflict beyond just climate change. Burke said that he hopes the results of the climate change conflict study will "shed new light on how the future climate will shape human societies."