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Climate Influences Global Conflicts and Violence, Study Reports

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Researchers found that higher temperatures led to an increase in violence throughout the world. (Photo : Flickr)

Climate changes that lead to abnormal temperatures and dangerous weather patterns can be very stressful. People who are used to mild rain but are then bombarded with hurricanes and tropical storms might be unprepared, leaving them with more damages than they can handle. Since climate changes can impact one's life drastically, a new study decided to venture into finding any associations between climate changes and conflicts on a global scale. According to this study done by researchers from the University of California, Berkeley and Princeton University, climate shifts have and still contribute to human conflicts and violence throughout the world.

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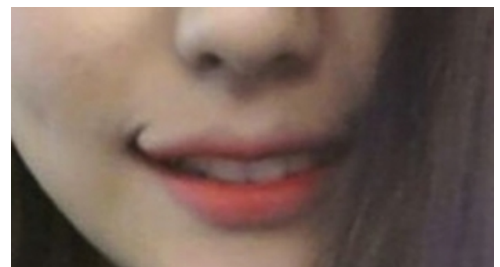
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For this study, the researchers reviewed 60 studies that composed of 45 multiple sets of data. These bodies of research included a wide range of fields, such as climatology, archaeology, political science and psychology. The team then

reviewed this data with the goal of finding a common statistical framework that would help them understand how climate changes affect the global community. The researchers decided to divide the data into three large categories of human conflict. The first group involved personal violence, which ranges from murders to rape. The second group was composed of intergroup violence and political instability, such as riots and civil wars. The last group dealt with institutional breakdowns, such as the complete over haul of governments or civilizations.

Based from the data, the researchers found that conflicts that existed in all three categories were associated with climate shifts. The category that was most affected by the shifts was the intergroup violence and political instability section. The researchers found that increases in temperature affected violence the most. The hotter the temperatures were, the more violence occurred in the world's

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history. The researchers also found that the association between climate shifts and violence was applicable to several nations that include Brazil, China, the United States, Germany and Somalia.

"We found that a 1 standard deviation shift towards hotter conditions causes the likelihood of personal violence to rise 4 percent and intergroup conflict to rise 14 percent," said Marshall Burke, the study's co-lead author and a doctoral candidate at Berkeley's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. "For a sense of scale, this kind of temperature change is roughly equal to warming an African country by 0.4°C (0.6°F) for an entire year or warming a United States county by 3°C (5°F) for a given month. These are moderate changes, but they have a sizable impact on societies."

Although the researchers do not have one explanation for this trend, they believe that climate changes must not be taken lightly. Based on future estimations that the world will get hotter within the next decades, keeping an eye of human conflict and violence in relation to temperatures could provide more insight into this relationship.

The study was published in [Science](#). The press release can be found [here](#).

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