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Violence in Humans Likely to Increase as Climates Changes

August 3, 2013 - 11:18am by **Julie Kent**



According to a new comprehensive study published this week in the journal Science, violence in humans is likely to increase as climate shifts. Researchers from the University of California, Berkeley and Princeton University analyzed 60 previous studies from all major regions of the world and found that even minor aberrations in climate can greatly escalate the risk of violence.

The researchers concluded that violence is linked to shifting climate, and said that the results of their study suggest that changes including drought, flood and high temperatures strongly increase the risk of violent clashes.

Marshall Burke, co-lead author of the study from UC Berkeley, said:

"This is a relationship we observe across time and across all major continents around the world. The relationship we find between these climate variables and conflict outcomes are often very large."

The scientists discovered that even minor shifts from the norm in climate increased the risk of violence. In several parts of the world, for example, slight changes in normal temperatures and rainfall resulted in violence. The escalation of violence includes domestic and personal violence, and even larger conflicts such as ethnic struggles in Europe and civil wars in Africa.

The researchers found that in the U.S., assaults, rapes and murders increased during heat waves, and in India, there was an increase in domestic violence during recent droughts. They suggest that the major factor in the relationship between climate change and violence is rising temperatures. Of the 27 modern studies they looked at, they found all 27 had a strong correlation between higher temperatures and violence.

With the current projected levels of climate change, the scientists say that the world is likely to become even more violent. The researchers predicted that an increase in global temperatures of just 2 degrees Celsius could increase the risk of intergroup clashes such as civil wars by over 50 percent, and such a temperature rise could also increase the risk of personal crimes by 15 percent.

Climate change experts have predicted that temperatures will increase by 2 degrees Celsius by 2040.

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