

WELCOMING PEOPLE DISPLACED BY THE CLIMATE CRISIS



The climate crisis impacts human security

A report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in August 2021 says that human security will be progressively threatened as the climate changes “because it undermines livelihoods, compromises culture and individual identity, increases migration that people would rather have avoided, and it can undermine the ability of states to provide the conditions necessary for human security.”

We have all seen the devastating impacts of dramatic weather changes - floods, droughts, extreme temperatures and forest fires - with the loss of life and damage across the globe. The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reports that the number of disasters driven by climate change has increased fivefold over the last 50 years.

Racial Injustice: Nuclear Colonialism meets Climate Injustice

Those impacted the most by climate breakdown are often those who have contributed the least. To compound this, indigenous populations facing rising sea levels and the loss of their remaining homelands are often already impacted by colonial legacies such as nuclear testing. In the Marshall Islands the equivalent of a Hiroshima bomb everyday for 12 years was dropped, using the population as human guinea pigs to see what radioactivity does to people. On one of the now uninhabitable atolls there is a concrete dome where highly toxic radioactive waste from the nuclear tests was buried. It is cracking and releasing its contents into the rising sea.

Indigenous peoples and communities of colour across the world have been disproportionately harmed by nuclear weapons

A recent report from the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) demonstrates the connections between nuclear weapons and racism and invites us to consider who is permitted to develop nuclear weapons? who is listened to? and on whom have we considered dropping our nuclear weapons? Read more here QR code



Rising sea levels make further radioactive contamination inevitable

Runit island is the site of a radioactive waste repository left by the United States after it conducted a series of nuclear tests on Enewetak Atoll between 1946 and 1958. Concerns around the deterioration of the waste site and highly radioactive material further contaminating the sea are ongoing.

The climate crisis and migration

Many communities are unable to survive as crops fail, livestock dies and homes are destroyed, causing the displacement of people as they seek safety and somewhere to live.

86 % of refugees live in countries next to their country of origin. In 2020 48 million people were displaced within their own country, due to climate disaster. The UK is host to 1% of the 26.4 million refugees forcibly displaced. We believe initiatives to support local peacebuilding between host communities and migrants that include the voices of women and girls from all sides are essential.

More can be done to prevent changes to the climate impacting human security. Migration need not be the only option.

We believe those who cannot stay in their traditional lands need to be welcomed with empathy, and supported with sufficient government funding so that migration is planned with respect for their dignity.

Selina Leem, from the Marshall Islands, spoke passionately as the Paris Climate Agreement was concluded in 2015:

“This Agreement should be the turning point in our story; a turning point for all of us.” Scan the QR code to hear her message, YouTube video.

Scan the QR code to a YouTube video from Oladosu Adenike, an eco-feminist based in Nigeria, highlighting the work she is leading to help restore the habitat and allow people, especially women and girls, to re-build a livelihood in the region.

What can be done to prevent displacement due to climate?

We believe the wealthiest nations need to assist countries that are experiencing terrifying conditions due to the climate crisis. In many cases local solutions that prevent displacement can be found, if climate finance initiatives make the necessary funds available and resources are shared. Many organisations are working to help communities adapt to a changing climate. Oxfam, Greenpeace, Water Aid to name just a few.

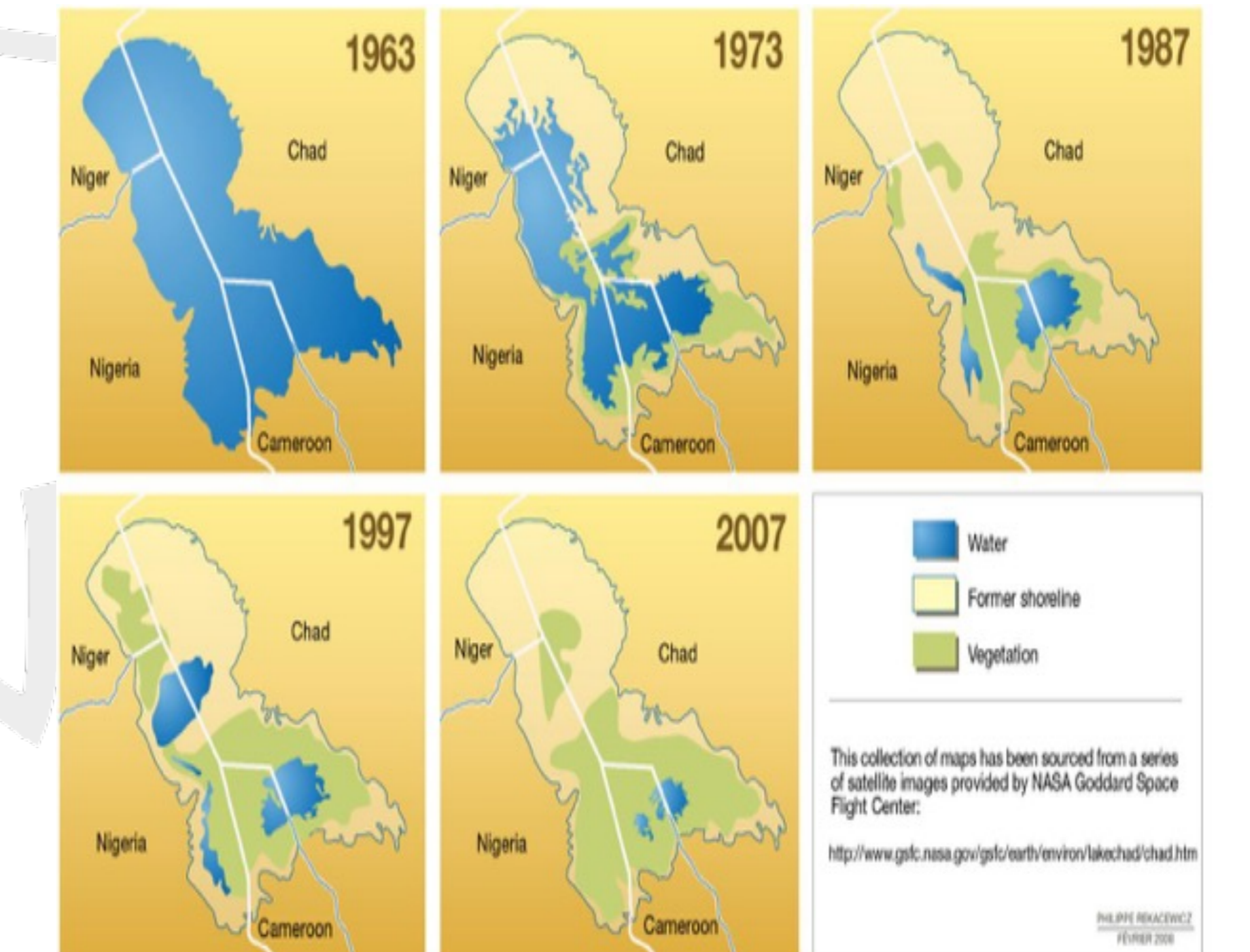
Governments need to acknowledge ‘climate refugees’ as well as ‘conflict refugees’.

Early warning systems

Due to the installation of improved multi-hazard early warning systems, the annual death toll attributed to climate disasters has fallen from more than 50,000 in the 1970s to around 18,000 in the 2010s. 91% of the more than 2 million people who had died over 50 years were in poorer countries. Unfortunately, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) reports that there are ‘severe gaps’ in weather observations, especially in Africa, which undermines the accuracy of early warning systems. Fewer than half of the 193 WMO members have multi-hazard early warning systems. Funding needs to be made available so that all at-risk communities have early warning systems.

Lake Chad Region

10.7m people have been displaced in the Lake Chad region. Two-thirds are women. Depletion of natural resources leads to conflict and political instability. Girls become ‘child brides’ as a survival strategy, and boys get recruited into armed groups.



<https://library.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/lake-chad-africa-inter-state-conflicts-and-cooperation>



ICAN-RACISM AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS



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