



**TOPIC:** International protection for people migrating due to climate change should be introduced

Environmental migration is often caused by the connection between unstable societies and fragile ecosystems. More and more people are forced to migrate from their places of origin in search of livelihoods. The UN Refugees Agency estimates that by 2050, about 200-250 million people will migrate due to climate change. However, no legal protection has been introduced to recognise the status of 'climate migrants' to date. For this reason, many scholars and activists are campaigning for legal recognition and the creation of an ad hoc international law. On the other hand, some UN member states are not convinced that such a status would provide adequate protection for these people.

**FOR THESIS:** "International protection for people migrating due to climate change should be introduced."

**AGAINST THESIS:** "International protection for people migrating due to climate change should not be introduced as it is not the most appropriate solution".

### Current situation and context

Rising temperatures and more extreme weather events have increased interest in the possible consequences of climate change. Particularly, in relation to the migration phenomenon.

However, climate migrants do not benefit from international legal protection. The definition of a refugee under the Geneva Convention only includes people who are persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality or political views. The climatic factors that cause migration can be slow onset events, such as droughts and rising sea levels, or rapid onset events such as floods and storms. However, migration is rarely induced by climatic factors alone; rather, they are combined with other factors (social, economic, political and demographic ones) creating this need. Moreover, climate migrants from low- and middle-income countries who move are mainly directed to neighbouring destinations. Therefore, it is assumed that climate change will not have major repercussions on global migration flows, which is why for some people there is no need for legal recognition but tangible aid to stop the consequences of climate change. The topic is highly debated and the recognition of the status of climate migrants raises many concerns. Nevertheless, climate migration is a tangible emergency that needs to be addressed.

### Pro arguments:

- Currently, there is a gap in international law for the protection of people displaced due to climate change; this is an injustice that must be remedied.
- Decisions and plans implemented by individual governments to recognize the climate crisis as a factor in migration movements are not sufficient; international recognition is needed.

### Against arguments:

- A legal status in international law would be rather useless, as most cases of migration and displacement induced by climate change take place internally.
- The factors driving migration flows are many and complex, from social to economic to political ones, and the climate crisis is nothing but a multiplier of these threats.

### Further Insights:

- AICS: [Climate migrants: a very controversial issue](#)
- IPCC: [Migration and Climate Change](#)
- [UNHCR](#)
- Resolution of the Council of Europe: [A Legal Status for 'Climate Refugees'](#)