ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Climate Change, Displaced Peoples and the Impact on the Global Community
AUTHOR(S):	Terry, Alexander
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ABSTRACT: Environmental refugees are people who have been displaced by environmental degradation, which has been increasing at a rapid rate due to climate change. The land which these people call home can no longer support a healthy lifestyle, due to intense drought, flooding, and extreme storms. Anthropogenic climate change has been caused by the excessive emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane; these gases accumulate in the atmosphere, causing a heating effect on the planet. The majority of countries which have a strong impact on climate change are developed nations, but the countries which are affected the most are those which are developing. This paper looks at the two case studies: the effects of sea level rise in Bangladesh and the impact of drought of the Sahel. These were related to the increase in disease and violence. The heating of the planet has resulted in sea level rise and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events. The rise in sea level will put populations of coastal communities at risk of being displaced due to flooding and storms. For example, Bangladesh is a country which has been seriously affected by the increase in intense storms due to its low-lying landscape and a high density of coastal communities. The storms which have torn through this area have caused large scale destruction and have been responsible for large scale migration. Climate change has caused serious amounts of flooding in some areas, but in much of Africa climate change has brought drought. Drought has caused desertification in throughout the landscape, while much of the population faces water shortages. Environmental scarcity has put many people on the move, creating stress between communities and the possibility for violent conflict. Those who are displaced due to climate change face a variety of threats: disease, unsafe conditions, and volatile social conditions. The findings of this paper are that displacement due to climate change is an environmental justice issue. There is little support available in the global system for environmental refugees because displacement due to environmental factors does not classify a person as a "refugee". Climate change has been caused primarily by the wealthiest countries on the planet, but it is the impoverished countries which are dealing directly with the effects. As the climate situation worsens the amount of people who will be displaced will increase, and the stress on the global community will increase. It is necessary to create policy to deal with environmental refugees, before the problem becomes unmanageable.