



## On the verge of misplacement: Pacific Island and climate-induced migration

Tooba Urooj

Legum Baccalaureus Graduate, Islamabad, Pakistan

[toobah015@gmail.com](mailto:toobah015@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The Pacific Island nations are severely impacted by climate change due to their comparatively miniscule geography, dense population concentration, and reliance on ecological systems for longevity. Pacific Islanders are compelled to leave their homes and migrate due to dwindling resources for their subsistence, freshwater, and nutrition, which leads to climate-persuaded migration. Such migration is likely to obliterate the indigenous perspectives and sense of national identity. Considering it, there is a good chance that the international reaction to global changing climate will result in a reduction in migration. The international accords are falling short of attaining their climate change objectives through the use of qualitative evaluation of secondary data gathered primarily from online sites, as well as scholarly articles. As a result, minimizing the effects of climate change is of prime significance & this global risk necessitates worldwide dedication to identify & address the terrible ramifications in order to lessen the increase in migration. The research comprehends migration & climate change's linkage. The recent growing tendencies in migration would be illustrated by the study of Kiribati. The case study would also demonstrate how important it is to put existing international conventions into practice in order to protect Pacific Island communities and their right of statehood.*

**Keywords:** Climate Change, Pacific Island, Migration, International Conventions, Statehood.

## Introduction

Climate change is amongst the most substantial economic, geopolitical & environmental problems of today's world. It necessitates earnest, swift, coordinated international response. In addition to damaging cyclones, tornadoes, and storms, there are an increasing number of climate change-related calamities that are happening all over the world. These include rising sea levels, coastal erosion, fires, droughts, and ocean acidity. According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the definition of climate change is "transformation of temperature that can be credited one way or the other to human actions that changes the world atmosphere's chemical makeup & that is in addition to natural climatic variables witnessed throughout analogous time frames."<sup>1</sup>

The Pacific's tiny island states are more vulnerable compared to any other section of the world to climate change's negative effects.<sup>2</sup> The large percentage of these low-lying islands are just some meters above sea level. In 1990, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a dire warning, stating that migration of people might be the most powerful consequence of climate change, with hundreds of thousands potentially being compelled to move out of their houses due to abrasion, rising seas, and farming disruption. Natural systems are changing as a result of the constantly increasing problem of climate change, which is also having an effect on the social, financial, and environmental spheres.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineties, it was commonly claimed that somewhere between 25 million individuals had been displaced from their properties and homes as a reaction of massive ecological stress factors, which included pollution, soil erosion, crop failures & other catastrophes. During that period, it was stated that those displaced individuals outnumbered all known refugees of warfare & governmental repression combined.<sup>4</sup>

The 2001 World Disasters Report from the Red Cross & Crescent Societies reiterated the 25 million current "environmental refugees" estimate. Furthermore, The United Nations (UN) University's Institute for Environment and Human Security sent out a warning in

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<sup>1</sup> "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change." UNFCCC, 1992. [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Salem, Saber. "Climate Change and the Sinking Island States in the Pacific." E-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, January 9, 2020. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/01/09/climate-change-and-the-sinking-island-states-in-the-pacific/>.

<sup>3</sup> Koppenfels, Amanda. "The Role of Regional Consultative Process in Managing International Migration." International Organization for Migration, June 20, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, Oli. "Migration and Climate - International Institute for Sustainable Development." UNDP, 2007. [https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/migration\\_climate.pdf](https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/migration_climate.pdf).

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October 2005, stating that by 2010, the world community would need to be ready to receive 50 million environmental refugees.<sup>5</sup>

Researchers have attempted to predict the number of individuals who can potentially be compelled to move due to climate change. For instance, there might be more than 200 million people swamped by changes in meteorological patterns as well as other rainstorm regimes, by unprecedented droughts of frequency and duration, in addition to rising seas and storm surges once global warming comes into effect.<sup>6</sup>

To put the figure in perspective, one out of every 45 individuals on the earth is going to be displaced due to changing weather patterns at the end of 2050. Additionally, this will outnumber the number of migrants in the world now. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 3% of the world's population, about 192 million individuals, currently live outside of their birth country.<sup>7</sup>

Climate Change is affecting Pacific Islands drastically with increasing floods, droughts, and depletion of resources. This, in turn, leads people to migrate in search of employment and sustenance. The article will explore how climate change is pushing people to migrate while investigating the international conventions set to protect the islanders. The far more detrimental impact of Climate Change is that the migrating population of the Pacific Islands, in search of employment opportunities, is losing their sense of statehood. The international community can help these Islanders by proper implementation of articles set out in the conventions devoted to the Changing Climate.

## **The climate change & migration nexus**

Disaster relocation has been deemed the vital catastrophic after-effect of climate change, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR).<sup>8</sup>

The link among Climate Change & Migration is deep. The island inhabitants now face failed harvests, debilitating scarcity of water, and existential crisis as a result of the increasing magnitude and severity of catastrophic flooding, coastal erosion, and shoreline devastation

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<sup>5</sup> O'Rourke, Breffni. "Un: Experts Say Natural Disasters May Create up to 50 Million Refugees." Radio Free Europe, April 8, 2008. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1062110.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Myers, Norman. "Environmental Refugees: An Emergent Security Issue." OSCE, May 22, 2005. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/3/14851.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Liesbeth. "Moroccan Migration Dynamics: Prospects for the Future," 2002. <https://publications.iom.int/books/mrs-no-10-moroccan-migration-dynamics-prospects-future>.

<sup>8</sup> "Climate Change and Disaster Displacement." UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html>.

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during the past few decades.<sup>9</sup> The phenomena of climate change have developed into an environmental concern that has a substantial impact on all aspects of life and living systems for many Pacific Islanders.

The rising levels of sea is among the significant effects of climate change on Pacific Islands. The water level is increasing primarily in two ways. Mainly, as a result of seas warming due to temperature increases, seawater is expanding, occupying more area in the oceanic plate, and increasing the level of water. The other pathway entails land-based melting ice caps, which causes the sea to acquire higher water.<sup>10</sup> Physical and societal vulnerability is caused by rise in volume of sea. The island's population as well as the existence of low-lying atolls, the predicted rate of sea level rise, the political ties between the atoll and its neighboring governments, and the economic resources available to deal with growing levels influence social vulnerability. All these are potential contributors to migration.

The lives of the residents are affected by these vulnerabilities. Some lowland coastal areas entirely drown as a result of increasing sea heights brought on by glacial & ocean ice melting, as well as the widespread water from warming temperatures, while other locations more frequently see a rapid rise in the water's surface height. Rising sea levels aggravate coastal erosion. Stronger storms and typhoons cause the destruction of the island's original people as well as the loss of land and buildings.<sup>11</sup> It could be necessary to move people outside of their home regions. Due to their reliance on marine resources, these small islands are especially at risk from the effects of increasing coastal flooding and modifications to maritime ecosystems.<sup>12</sup>

Many predictions of the outcomes of climate change take into account the changing patterns of extreme occurrences. Numerous climatic abnormalities are frequent, such as hurricanes (with their associated rising seas and choppy weather), famine, tidal currents, and the prevalence of pathogens that are influenced by the climate are all common in the majority

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<sup>9</sup> Rasheed, Hussain. "For Small Island Nations, Climate Change Is Not a Threat. It's Already Here." World Economic Forum, September 2019. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/09/island-nations-maldives-climate-change/>.

<sup>10</sup> US Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "How Is Sea Level Rise Related to Climate Change?" NOAA's National Ocean Service, June 1, 2013. <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/sealevelclimate.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Michael et al. "Sea Level Rise and Implications for Low-Lying Islands." IPCC. <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/chapter/chapter-4-sea-level-rise-and-implications-for-low-lying-islands-coasts-and-communities/>

<sup>12</sup> Environment, UN. "UNEP Annual Report for 2002." UNEP, 2002. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/unep-annual-report-2002>.

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of Pacific Island nations and territories. Following a disaster, communities frequently migrate as a way to replenish their diminished local livelihoods. This frequently takes the shape of circular migration. The need for short-term migration may be anticipated to rise if extraordinary events weakened or interfered with societal protection more severely.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, it is possible to consider three options as far as the nexus of Climate Change & Migration is concerned around the Pacific Island:

1. Climate change consequences, particularly ocean warming, may put certain Pacific Island inhabitants' accessibility of land in danger. For example, landslides, storms on the riverbank plain, or storm surges could all lead to this. In these circumstances, the prospective colonization sites can end up being borderline and, in the most extreme instances, unfit for occupancy.
2. Climate change may have an effect on economies, both in monetary and subsistence ones. Although communities might be stable places to live, their ability to serve residents' necessities will decline. Among other things, it would jeopardize opportunities for employment and food supply.
3. Conceivable situation is one in which ecological circumstances deteriorate even though settlement zones are highly secured and provide sustainable incomes. Examples include modifications of disease transmitters, a decline in the caliber of the groundwater, and an increase in the seriousness of catastrophic incidents.<sup>14</sup>

It is safe to say that people affected by seasonal disruptions, heavy rains, or unexpected long-term natural droughts tend to seek refuge in countries other than their own. They don't all leave their nations; many stay behind; yet if they can't relocate permanently, they all do so temporarily in the hopes of one day going back.<sup>15</sup>

### **Rising trends of Migration on the Pacific Island**

Migration isn't a modern development in the Pacific area. Islanders in the Pacific have moved for ages in response to social and environmental change. It is predicted that a significant increase in migrant populations from the Pacific Islands is presumed to occur in

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<sup>13</sup> Sonia, et al. "Changes in Climate Extremes and Their Impacts on the Natural Physical Environment." IPCC.. [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/SREX-Chap3\\_FINAL-1.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/03/SREX-Chap3_FINAL-1.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> ILO. "International Labor Organization," 2014. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/261/Pacific.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Myers, Norman. "Environmental Refugees: An Emergent Security Issue." OSCE, May 22, 2005. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/3/14851.pdf>

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the next 40 years.<sup>16</sup> The main factors driving migration are likely to be depleting resources, degradation, and the rate of environmental change, which is largely due to climate change.

More people are anticipated to consider migration (internal or international) as an individual's adaptation to climate change plan because the standard of living that Pacific residents can access declines. Some Pacific regions are more at risk of migration than others. Kiribati is probably among the highest migrating nations due to excessive population growth and depleting resources and livelihood.

## Case Study: Kiribati Island

Kiribati presents an important case study for the rising trends of migration due to Climate Change. The Phoenix, Gilbert and Line Island groupings, which together make up the Republic of Kiribati and cover a sea expanse of 3.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, are situated in the Central Pacific Ocean. Including an entire landmass of 811 km<sup>2</sup>, it is made up of 32 low-lying tiny islands and one elevated limestone island.<sup>17</sup> The country of Kiribati has 132,245 inhabitants.<sup>18</sup> Despite having a modest land area and population, this nation-state has significant issues.

Most of Kiribati's islands are threatened by extreme events including droughts and floods, 1988-1989 & 2007-2009 specifically saw severe droughts. Resultantly, the Islands' waterways shrank, the underwater turned corrosive, and the flora dried up. This had an especially negative effect on the production of palm kernel oil on the outlying islands since the coconut palms withered. The ocean's deterioration is one other consequence of climate change. Among the waters surrounding Kiribati, aragonite congestion amount has dwindled about four point five (4.5) in the eighteenth century to around three point nine (3.9) in 21st century, which has a negative impact on reefs development.<sup>19</sup>

In a poll conducted in Kiribati, 81% of households said that sea level rise had had an influence on them over the previous 10 years, while 94% of households said that

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<sup>16</sup> Campbell, Jillian. "Climate Change and Migration: the Case of the Pacific Islands and Australia." *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, 2016. <https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:394197>.

<sup>17</sup> Kiribati Government. "Kiribati Development Plan 2012-15: Mid-Term Review Report," 2012. <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/KDP-2012-2015-Mid-Term-Review.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> "Kiribati Population 2022." World Population Review. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/kiribati-population>.

<sup>19</sup> Oakes. "Kiribati: Climate Change and Migration - Relationships between Household Vulnerability, Human Mobility and Climate Change." *UNU Collections*. United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, 2016. <http://collections.unu.edu/view/UNU:5903>.

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environmental dangers had had some impact on them.<sup>20</sup> The survey indicates that migration is most frequently caused by global warming.

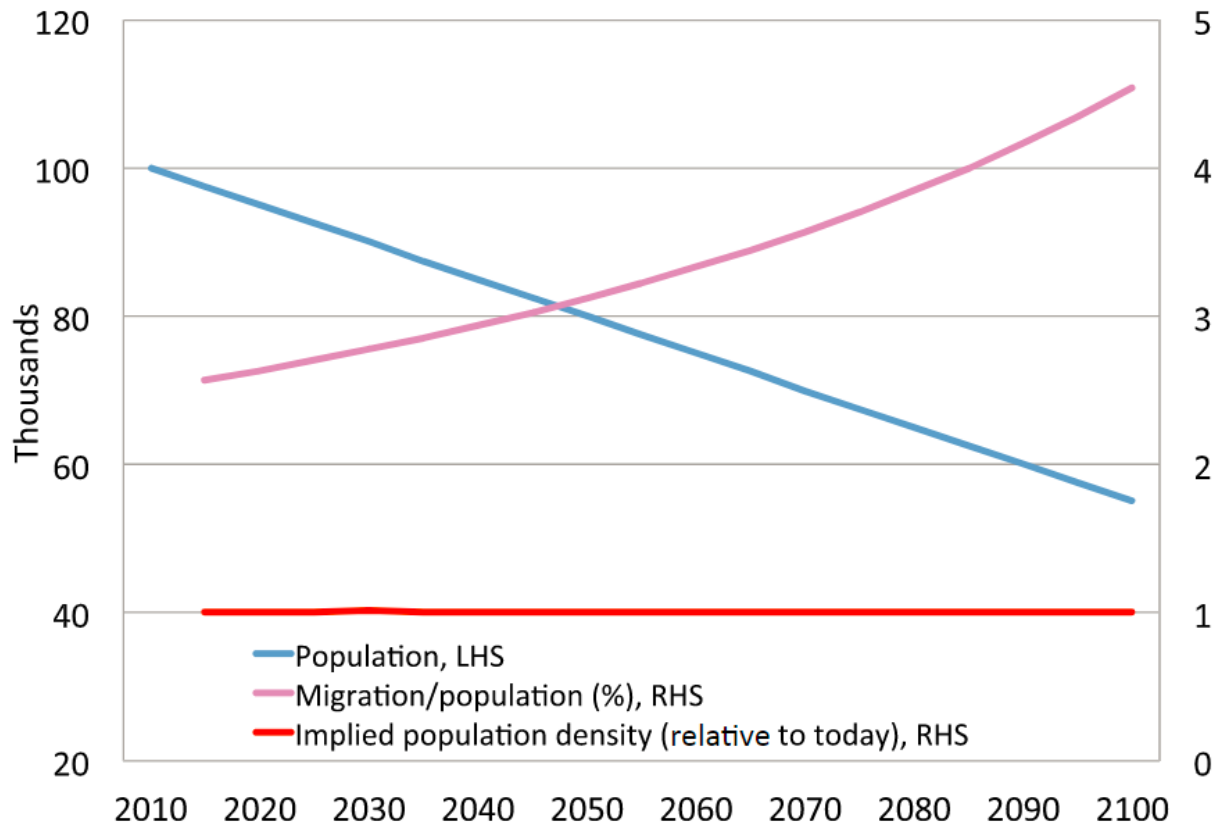
Although the Kiribatians have a strong connection to their native land, the shifting climate patterns force them to relocate. The majority of residents who depend on livelihood services, such as Kiribati's crop yields or coastal habitats, have been significantly impacted by climate change. Over 70% of homes are forced to send a member of the household away because of rising sea levels, incursion of seawater, harder times agricultural cultivation, & devastating floods. Consequently, the recent climate emigration plan, which is presented like an adaptive tool in order to enhance catastrophe tolerance, defines as a remedy given the island's limited economic prospects and employment stability. The population of Kiribati is expanding relatively quickly, and the unemployment rate is quite high.<sup>21</sup> This rapid population expansion is problematic. It is growing at an average annual rate of 1.6%. By 2025, Kiribati's population is predicted to nearly double if nothing is done. This increase in population with little to no resources is further leading people to migrate.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> <sup>21</sup>“Priorities of the People - Hardship in Kiribati.” Asian Development Bank, 2007. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29735/hardship-kiribati.pdf>.





- Kiribati’s rising sea level and immigration<sup>22</sup>

The table demonstrates the analysis of the effects of how storm surges and sea level rise affect Kiribati citizens’ movement patterns. The examination starts with the World Bank research on Kiribati’s experience with regard to the impacts of rise of sea level. The combined consequences of the anticipated sea level rise and the once-every-14-year coastal flooding are simulated in this study, by 2100, there would be an impact on 54% of the area in South Tarawa and 80% of the area in North Tarawa. The methodology calculates the amount of area that will be accessible from now to 2100 using the lower figure (54%) and a straight shift. A significant increase in the migrating population can be seen in the picture.

The analysis also takes population increase into account. The 2005 census estimates that the population will rise from 100,000 in 2010 to 130,000 by 2025 under its “medium” scenario. The main finding is that by 2100, the migrating density would increase at an

<sup>22</sup> Wyett, Kelly. “Escaping a Rising Tide: Sea Level Rise and Migration in Kiribati.” *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 2013. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/app5.7>



alarming rate, which is obvious given the diminishing land resources and population growth together.<sup>23</sup>

### **Will Pacific Islanders lose their Statehood?**

Under present regulations, some Pacific Islanders who relocate or migrate abroad due to Climate Change catastrophes run the chance of dropping their right to pass citizenship on to their kin. This is based on a review of the legal provisions of 23 Pacific Island Countries & Territories (PICTs).<sup>24</sup> While the majority of Islanders would like to remain in the existing residences for a very long time, Pacific authorities are grudgingly taking cross-boundary immigration into consideration so as to safeguard their residents from the disastrous impacts of climate change.

What happens to a person's relationship with their native nation if they have to move away, possibly permanently? This question is intricately linked to significant social, cultural, and spiritual issues. They might even end up stateless in some circumstances. In fact, certain citizens might already be in danger of becoming stateless & losing their citizenship.

The risk of statelessness is not the only one people may experience if they leave their homes. People may be able to obtain a different nationality under the citizenship laws of various PICTs, although doing so may prevent them from keeping or passing down their original nationality.

Losing one's nationality separates legal bond of a person with their native country & bars their participation participating in its political future. Most immediately, losing citizenship typically results in losing the ability to vote for that nation (actually, in certain PICTs, the individuals who live abroad might also forfeit their privileges). Losing citizenship may eventually make it more difficult to interact with the native country's administration.<sup>25</sup>

Pacific Islanders who lose their nationality also experience emotional and psychological suffering. Traditional citizenship ideals are at odds with the just-becoming reality of a climate-change nexus, which is characterized by migration and nationality loss. In the past, a person's citizenship served as an exclusive tie to one State, entailing the duty of unwavering dedication & expecting to contribute in some way to the country's interest on

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Foster, Michelle. "Preventing Statelessness and Nationality Loss in the Context of Climate Change." European Network on Statelessness, 2022.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

home soil or abroad through patriotic service. Innovative approaches to citizenship needed to be implemented in PICT to preserve linkages between people and places as climate change poses a risk to make Pacific Islands unlivable, driving huge portions of masses outside.<sup>26</sup>

### **Inadequate Implementation of Conventions about Climate Change**

Since the 2015 signing of the Paris Climate Agreement, numerous nations have raised commitments towards climate through the yearly UN climate change conferences regarded as COPs. However, thousands of Pacific islanders are already suffering from the horrendous outcomes of changing climatic situation, and they are clearly in existential risk for their “native land, heritage, economy,” as well as the notion of Pacific identification.

Pacific Island countries are avid advocates of Climate Change related conventions, but they have been mostly ignored in past United Nations (UN) climate change conferences and agreements due to a lack of resources and financial issues. The interesting fact is that the Pacific countries as a whole produce 0.3% of global emissions of carbon dioxide.<sup>27</sup> The effects of the emissions created by industrialized countries are being felt by it.

Although there is a high degree of certainty that resources would be depleted due to climate change, the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes that there is a poor understanding on the global level, of the repercussions for the populations that rely on these.<sup>28</sup>

Although it is widely acknowledged in international conventions that Pacific countries are most impacted by climate change, little is investigated about how coastal communities are affected, their adaptation strategies, or their limitations. Over 60% of respondents in the Pacific countries, according to research performed between 2013 and 2016 within the scope of the Pacific Climate Change and Displacement initiative, said they would leave their country if sea levels rose.<sup>29</sup> There are no steps taken by the international conventions to determine current coping mechanisms, anticipated adaptation techniques, and migration trends—where would they go and what would they do? The Conventions should work to

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<sup>26</sup> Pita. “Protecting the Nationality of Pacific Islanders as Climate Change Hits.” PINA, May 17, 2022. <https://pina.com.fj/2022/05/17/protecting-the-nationality-of-pacific-islanders-as-climate-change-hits/>.

<sup>27</sup> “Climate and Development in East Asia and the Pacific Region.” World Bank Group, November 15, 2022. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eap/brief/climate-and-development-in-east-asia-and-pacific-region>.

<sup>28</sup> “Ar5 Synthesis Report: Climate Change 2014.” IPCC, 2015. [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/05/SYR\\_AR5\\_FINAL\\_full\\_wcover.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/05/SYR_AR5_FINAL_full_wcover.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> “Pacific Island Climate Refugees.” International Labor Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/261/Pacific.pdf>.

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comprehend potential macro-level repercussions and of Climate Change on Displacement and national strategy of Pacific Island countries. The most highly valued climate-related conventions including the Paris Agreement and COP26 failed hugely to implement the undertakings made during the conferences.

## Paris Agreement

In the Paris Agreement, Leaders of the world committed to working to maintain temperature increases under two degrees centigrade over pre-industrial levels or at one point five degrees centigrade, if feasible, to be able to avert the severe consequences of global climate change. According to recent research by Climate Action Tracker, almost every country horribly fell short of achieving this objective.<sup>30</sup> Carbon dioxide levels in the globe are constantly increasing, which is alarmingly increasing Earth's temperature.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout Paris Agreement, only a single reference to Pacific Island countries was made. Additionally, it is crucial to remember that the Paris Accord doesn't, in its entirety, represent a legally enforceable agreement. Instead, it urges nations to use Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to create their roadmaps for reducing emissions and preparing for climate change.

Nations that break the accord cannot be punished in any way. One of the first move of Donald Trump as the United States (US) head of state was to decide to exit from the Paris Agreement. The problem is not that the US decided to stop upholding the pact (even though it's a serious setback); the dilemma is that the US suffered no repercussions for doing it. Countries that fail to uphold their commitments under the Paris Agreement are not subject to sanctions. Nations can keep damaging the environment, using coal and oil as well as producing Carbon dioxide at frightening levels without suffering any serious consequences. No monitoring body exists to keep countries accountable and check if they are achieving their goals. For nations who don't, there are no penalties or financial punishments.<sup>32</sup>

The futility of the accord is demonstrated by the planet's continuous destruction. Global carbon emissions have increased by about 4% in the years after the agreement's signing. Additionally, pollutants from fossil fuel sources grew in the previous year: emissions from

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<sup>30</sup> "Global Update: Climate Target Updates Slow as Science Demands Action." Climate Action Tracker, 2021. <https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/global-update-september-2021/>.

<sup>31</sup> "Is the World Living up to Its Climate Commitments?" United Nations, 2019. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/09/1045592>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

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gasoline rose by 3%, emissions from crude by 1.7%, and emissions from coal by 1%. Nevertheless, the peak in carbon emissions has not yet been reached.<sup>33</sup> The overall outcome is a pointless deal that fails to address the enormous risk presented by changing climatic situations, despite popular belief.

### COP26

The 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26 was hailed as a final opportunity to prevent global warming from rising above 1.5 degrees Celsius and save the future of Pacific Island countries. Significant commitments were made by participating countries to reduce their reliance on stopping deforestation, phasing out petroleum and other non-renewable resources, and quickening the switch to emission-free means of conveyance. On the contrary, for the citizens of the Pacific Island, the negotiations fell short of taking the decisive steps required to ensure prevention of excessive change in climate and did not adequately represent the countries who are perhaps particularly susceptible to environmental poverty. The agreement forced them to rely on major emitters for more substantial emissions reductions.<sup>34</sup>

The Pacific Islands Climate Action Network's board chair, Ashwini Leopold, said, "At COP26, authorities eventually had the courage to address the issue of emissions & fossil fuel reliance almost over 30 years, but they did not include a radical solution. Subsequent COPs will need to go beyond the lukewarm wording that ultimately supports the objectives of fossil fuel companies and expand on the minimal efforts made in the Glasgow accords."<sup>35</sup>

Although some countries are moving toward renewable energy, as evidenced by the large-scale solar energy facilities being constructed in Portugal, Morocco, and the United Arab Emirates. is now getting the majority of its energy from renewable sources, and an increasing number of nations are discovering their capability to operate their systems purely on sources of renewable energy. Yet this number is small compared to the hazards created by Climate Change.

Most of the wealthy countries like Australia, France & the United States (US) refused to cut down their carbon emissions. Moreover, they also denied supporting a funding facility

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<sup>33</sup> Wilson, Catherine. "Declaration of War: Pacific Islands Blast COP26 Pledges." Climate Crisis News | Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera, November 27, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/27/declaration-of-war-pacific-islands-blast-cop26-pledges>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

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for loss and damage, despite their historical responsibility for the current predicament of Pacific Island nations. For Australia, this amounts to a serious breach of its obligations towards the Pacific Islands, who are also its immediate neighbors.<sup>36</sup>

Although, 27th United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP27, that took place in the Middle Eastern country of Egypt has introduced a “loss and damage” fund. But it is no more than a consolation prize for the Pacific Island countries. There are no clear indications as to how the fund is going to function, who will get cash from it, and the amount that each party will contribute.<sup>37</sup> The globe is making the situation of Pacific Island countries way worse by not complying with the undertakings made in the International Conventions and emitting tons of gases into the environment.

## Conclusion

In a nutshell, the situation for the Pacific Island region is deteriorating. The Pacific Islanders’ daily lives are being negatively impacted by climate change, which is pushing some of them to leave their home nations. As a result, the Islander loses their identity and statehood. The Pacific Islands will be devoid of human remains in the not-too-distant future. The world community, although implementing climate change conventions like the Paris Agreement as well as the COP, has been unable to find a meaningful solution to control the mounting catastrophe. The developed countries are not making an effort to meet the minimum emission level, making the climatic situation worse for Pacific Islanders. The situation is deteriorating; there is no denying that if industrialized countries do not regulate their emissions and no substantial measures are made, climate change would force the Pacific Islands to give up their population and erase all traces of any nationality. Climate catastrophes can still be dealt with by following the proper procedures outlined in international law. There should be some kind of worldwide check and balance system in place to keep each country’s emissions under check. During climate change conferences, it should be prioritized to invite the climate change specialists belonging to the Pacific Islands in order to advocate their case and then put their recommendations into action. There is still

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<sup>36</sup> Lagipoiva. “COP26: Pacific Delegates Condemn 'Monumental Failure' That Leaves Islands in Peril.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, November 15, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/15/cop26-pacific-delegates-condemn-monumental-failure-that-leaves-islands-in-peril>

<sup>37</sup> Anne. “Loss and Damage: What Happens next?” Deutsche Welle, November 21, 2022. <https://www.dw.com/en/loss-and-damage-what-happens-next/a-63829106>.

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time to get things under control before the situation becomes disastrous and climate change spreads its wings to other parts of the planet.

It is obvious that the Pacific is sinking. With each passing day, rising seas are swallowing parts of these low-lying islands and atolls, pushing Islanders to mitigate. The case study of Kiribati demonstrates that migration and climate change are strongly correlated. The mitigating population is finding it difficult to maintain their right to citizenship with their homeland country because of the national laws of Pacific Island countries. The way the international community is ignoring this pressing problem by not meeting the goal of achieving the minimum level of emissions as set out in International Conventions is highly concerning. What is literally a question of life and death for Pacific Islanders is not given attention by developed countries. The people displaced by climate change are not just people whom wealthy countries must accommodate; they are victims of a phenomenon that they had little control over, and they deserve some recognition, along with reparations.

The threat of widespread relocation brought on by climate change must be accepted by the world community. International recognition of the issue, deeper comprehension of its scope, and a commitment to solving it are required. This can be done by the immediate action of the international bodies and make determined, legally conclusive measures to reduce carbon emissions prior to it being mistimed and the islands beginning to perish one after another. The International Conventions should introduce a proper check and balance system to investigate the countries exceeding the minimum emission ratio. The violations should be met with penalties in the form of monetary payment. This money should be used for countries that are at the receiving end of climate disasters as a result of these emissions.

The loss and damage fund should be properly implemented, with funding specifically allocated to areas like the Pacific Islands those who are exceedingly susceptible from the disastrous impacts of climate change. Donor base and innovative finance tools should be introduced in this regard. Other possible solutions can be the implementation of taxes on fossil fuel companies and diverting the money to countries struggling with the climate crisis. These measures can ensure that the Pacific Island states may not disappear from the world map, at least not in the near future.