

NO WARMING, NO WAR



Climate, Militarism, and Migration



How do climate change, immigration, and militarism relate?

Key points:

- U.S. Militarism brings violence to communities in this country and around the world, while degrading our environment and contributing directly to climate change.
- The conditions of a climate-changed world compound existing crises and cause more instability, pushing people to migrate from their homes.
- Increasingly, the United States deploys military power in response to climate-linked migration.
- Immigration policy is climate policy, and demilitarization is at the core of upholding the right to move and the right to stay.

What do climate change and immigration have to do with each other?

Climate change drives migration in two major ways. Stronger storms, prolonged drought, raging wildfires, and other disasters are already pushing millions of people to leave home. But climate change also amplifies pre-existing crises of poverty, instability, and violence impacting regions of the world—conditions often created or exacerbated by U.S. policies. As global warming accelerates, more people will be forced to move. More than [200 million people](#) are expected to be displaced by climate change by the middle of the century.

Climate-linked migration is already happening. Weather-related disasters are now a [leading cause](#) of displacement, and climate change has exacerbated conflicts that are another main source of migration. Most who have been displaced live in Global South countries, who are collectively responsible for [less than 10%](#) of the emissions that cause climate change.

How does U.S. militarism fit into climate-linked migration?

On a warming planet, cross-border migration will rise. Rich countries that are [responsible](#) for a vast majority of excess emissions also have the resources to adapt to climate change and support displaced people around the world. And yet, policymakers in the United States too often characterize climate-linked migration as a “national security threat” to help justify massive investments to [militarize borders](#) and terrorize immigrant communities. Both the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Pentagon have cited the climate crisis as justification for their [ballooning budgets](#).

By turning climate change into a security issue, those who have [contributed the least](#) to the crisis not only suffer the most from its consequences, but are also targeted with harsh security responses to those very climate impacts.

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What's the outcome of our militarized budgets?

The bloated border enforcement budget means increasing numbers of armed border patrol agents and surveillance technologies from drones, aircrafts, and sensors to facial recognition and human detection technologies, transforming the border region into a war zone. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—the federal agencies that carry out efforts to target, jail, and deport immigrants—have separated thousands of loved ones, caused hundreds of deaths, and terrorized immigrant communities.

The companies that [profit from the border security business](#) are often the same corporations that benefit from lucrative military contracts. Military contracting giants like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon also sell military equipment to ICE and CBP. CBP has the [largest U.S. drone fleet](#) of its kind outside the Department of Defense, including Predator B drones that were built for military use but have been used by CBP since 2006. Thousands of immigrants are unnecessarily locked up every year, tearing families apart and [wasting resources](#) that should be used for the public services and institutions that actually keep our communities safe.

Violent and oppressive immigration policies like family separation and detention [do not deter migrants](#) faced with dire situations at home from attempting to come to the United States. Instead of criminalizing migration and treating climate migrants like “national security threats,” we must develop a rights-respecting, welcoming immigration system that upholds dignity and humanity, and we must take responsibility for our behaviors that drive migration, from our outsized emissions to our militarized foreign policy.

How do we take action?

Facing a climate-changed future, we need to fundamentally change our society to be more just and caring. The United States has the capacity to protect people seeking safety at our borders, just as it has the capacity to demilitarize our budget and begin to repair the harmful effects of decades of destructive policies at home and abroad. To do so, we must reverse our trend in border militarization and end all anti-immigrant operations carried out by federal agencies in the United States. That starts with [transforming our militarized budget priorities](#). We must [divest](#) from our [militarized budget](#), reclaim our resources, and reinvest in climate solutions and public services that create more sustainable communities and support everyone's ability to live whole and secure lives.

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