

Intersections between Forced Migration, Socio-Environmental Justice, and Care for Our Common Home. Analysis of the Ecological Crisis and its Impact on Human Mobility.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

IDB - Inter-American Development Bank

CEJIL - Center for Justice and International Law

IACHR - Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

CO₂ – Carbon Dioxide

COP - Conference of the Parties

I/A Court H.R. - Inter-American Court of Human Rights

CPAL - Conference of Jesuit Provincials of Latin America

ERIC - Reflection, Research, and Communication Team

IDMC - Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LGBTIQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer

OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

WMO - World Meteorological Organization

UAP - Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus

REDD+ - Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

RESAMA - South American Network for Environmental Migration

RJM – Jesuit Network with Migrants

UNDRR - United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

NEITHER NATURAL NOR VOLUNTARY:

*Intersections between Forced Migration,
Socio-Environmental Justice, and Care for
Our Common Home. Analysis of the Ecological
Crisis and its Impact on Human Mobility.*

*It would hardly be helpful to describe the symptoms
without acknowledging the human origins of the
ecological crisis - Laudato Si'.*



INTRODUCTION

Climate change is no longer a distant threat; its effects are visible and profound across many corners of the world, and Latin America and the Caribbean are no exception. On the contrary, our region is highly vulnerable¹. As the deterioration of our Common Home advances, the planet's temperature rises, and the climate shifts, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as hurricanes, prolonged droughts, and floods increase, rendering many places uninhabitable. The loss of livelihoods and the threat to fundamental rights such as access to health, food, and education are just some of the consequences that are transforming the environment and forcing thousands of people to leave their homes.

The World Bank estimates that by 2050, around 17 million people could be displaced within their own countries due to climate-related reasons (Rigaud et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) reported more than 13 million internal displacements² due to disasters in the Americas in 2024,

1 In the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, the panel produced regional projections and modeled forecasts for North, Central, and South America, which can be accessed at the following links, respectively: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_North_and_Central_America.pdf

https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/factsheets/IPCC_AR6_WGI_Regional_Fact_Sheet_Central_South_America.pdf

2 The IDMC differentiates between the number of internal displacements and the number of displaced individuals. Methodologically, the former refers to each new movement a person is forced to make within their country's borders, recorded during the year. In contrast, the total number of internally displaced persons («populations») reflects all individuals who were living in a situation of internal displacement at the end of the recorded year (IDMC, 2024, p. 127). At the end of 2024, the IDMC estimated 9.7 million displaced persons in the region, of which 9.5 million were due to conflict and 103,000 due to disasters.

compared to 1.5 million caused by conflicts (IDMC, 2025). Despite these figures, the estimate remains conservative due to the lack of detailed data on disaster-related displacement (IDMC, 2024), and no data is available to quantify cross-border displacement.

This phenomenon does not occur in isolation. In our region, the climate crisis intersects with historical inequalities, structural violence, and economic models that deplete natural resources and deepen social exclusion. Additionally, the response of many states has focused on migration containment, placing the lives and dignity of migrants at risk. People fleeing for climate-related reasons face multiple threats to their integrity, safety, and freedom and, in many cases, lack adequate protection mechanisms. This document takes this reality as a starting point to reflect on an urgent question: What happens when climate becomes yet another cause of forced migration?

This report presents the perspective of the Jesuit Network with Migrants on the relationship between climate change, socio-environmental justice, and forced migration. It is the result of a collective process involving a literature review³, internal analysis⁴,

3 We highlighted the research led by ERIC-Radio Progreso together with other international partners (ERIC, 2021; Secours Catholique – Caritas France, 2023, p. 7).

4 In particular, we refer to the regional meeting held at the end of 2024 to establish a joint advocacy agenda, the agenda proposed for Cartagena+40, and the series of conversations “Climate Migrations and Care for Our Common Home,” co-organized in 2022 with the Luciano Mendes de Almeida National Observatory of Socio-Environmental Justice (OLMA), the Jesuit Service for Migrants and Refugees Brazil (SJMR Brazil), Fe y Alegría, among others, with the support of Hispanics in Philanthropy. These can be accessed at the following links: Climate Migrations & Care for Our Common Home: A Global Perspective: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-tvGxI0jDs&list=PL9iYeh-aBzdt7K7y-e92OO-qSt8T6Z_QHT&index=5&t=368s; Latin American and Caribbean Perspective on Climate Migrations & Care for Our Common Home: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szhsMNooemQ&list=PL9iYeh-aBzdt7K7y-e92OO-qSt8T6Z_QHT&index=6&t=4930s, and Climate Migrations and Care for Our Common Home: A Bra-

dialogue, and advocacy with other civil society organizations⁵. It also compiles the experiences of specific cases from affected communities and is based on official documents from the Church and the Society of Jesus⁶. At its core are the individuals and populations who are forced to migrate, remain in increasingly unviable environments (Rigaud et al., 2018, p. xxi), or live trapped in a continuous cycle of violence, exposed to high levels of risk and vulnerability. Immobility is another side of the same coin.

At the Jesuit Network with Migrants, we recognize that forced migration due to climate and socio-environmental factors has deep roots in an extractive economic model. This model degrades territories, restricts the right to a healthy environment, and forces entire communities into displacement. For this reason, we speak of “socio-environmental conflicts and disasters,” acknowledging the decisive role of human action and echoing Pope Francis’ call to see the complexity and the interconnection between the social crisis, the environmental crisis, and the Care for Our Common Home.

It should be clarified that we understand “migration” in a broad

zilian Perspective: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QoQYVFLi7uU&t=974s>

5 Some of the organizations working and promoting dialogue at this intersection include: Alianza Américas; American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); Amnesty International; Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL); Center for Studies on Law, Justice, and Society (DeJusticia); Global Centre for Climate Mobility (GMCC); Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI); South American Network for Environmental Migrations (RESAMA); and Sin Fronteras México. Additionally, we have collaborated in the preparation for the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (I/A Court H.R.) hearing in February 2024, from which the Resolution on Human Mobility induced by climate change was published. We have also contributed to spaces where a [Declaration for Climate and Migration Justice in Latin America was developed. Climate and migration justice is the justice of the peoples.](#)

6 The Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus (2019), the Common Apostolic Project of CPAL (2021), and the work of the Integral Ecology Group (2021).

sense: both internal and international, and we refer to **people forced into displacement due to disasters and socio-environmental conflicts, as well as the adverse effects of climate change**, including those undertaking forced, multi-causal, temporary or permanent, planned or emergency movements, whether within or across their borders. Our focus is on individuals migrating out of necessity, not by choice, and on those who, for several reasons, are unable to migrate.

These individuals, often unrelated to the cause of the climate problem, face its worst consequences. Indigenous, Afro-descendant, peasant, and other historically marginalized groups: women, children, older adults, persons with disabilities, or persons of diverse sexual and gender identities, as well as those defending their territories, often face criminalization or violence as a result.

This report is structured into five sections. The first presents the regional overview of inequality, violence, and their links to displacement caused by climate and socio-environmental factors. The second clarifies key concepts such as climate change, socio-environmental justice, the Capitalocene, extractivism, and socio-environmental conflicts, providing an understanding of how these concepts interrelate and help build a perspective on forced migration driven by environmental factors. The third section analyzes the consequences of this reality on the guarantee of rights and displacement patterns, highlighting the violation of human rights and the continuum of violence faced by migrants. The fourth section presents three case studies from Honduras, Colombia, and Brazil, illustrating both the elements identified in the previous sections and common patterns that reveal the various faces of forced migration driven by socio-environmental causes in the region. The report concludes with the final section, which provides the conclusions.

This document is intended to serve as a tool for understanding and action. First, it calls for approaching climate migration from a comprehensive perspective, one that goes beyond numbers or natural disasters, and instead acknowledges the complexity of the processes that drive people to migrate. Second, it offers a critical reading of the development model based on extractivism, which generates severe socio-environmental impacts and territorial conflicts. Finally, it complements the document *Cuando el clima obliga a migrar: políticas, vacíos de protección y propuestas de acción desde la Red Jesuita con Migrantes* (When Climate Forces Migration: Policies, Protection Gaps, and Proposals for Action from the Jesuit Network with Migrants), to outline advocacy pathways for the recognition and protection of the human rights of individuals displaced by climate and socio-environmental causes.

1. AN UNEQUAL CONTINENT FACING A PLANETARY CRISIS: THE STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF DISPLACEMENT



According to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Latin America is the most unequal region in the world, where “the richest 10% of the population earn, on average, 12 times more than the poorest 10%” (2024, Paragraph 1). This is no small fact when considering the link between the climate crisis and the extreme inequality, which worsened after the pandemic. The report *Climate Equality: A Planet for the 99%*, published by OXFAM, states:

In 2019, the richest 1% of the world's population generated 16% of global carbon emissions, equivalent to that of the poorest 66% (5 billion people) (...) [and] it is projected that, by 2030, emissions from the richest 1% of the world's population will exceed by more than 22 times the safe limit of emissions (to keep global warming below 1.5°C).” (Khalfan et al., 2023, p. x)

We can therefore conclude that, on the one hand, the consequences of socio-environmental disasters and the adverse effects of climate change are being redistributed toward those living in poverty, disproportionately impacting populations such as children, women, older adults, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, migrants, LGBTIQ+ individuals, among other vulnerable groups. “While wealthy individuals and countries are responsible for the climate crisis, those most affected by its impacts are people living in poverty, excluded groups, the Global South, small island States, and other particularly vulnerable countries.” (Khalfan et al., 2023, p. xvii).

The 2021 report on Latin America and the Caribbean by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) highlighted that the region faces a higher risk of disasters due to its high territorial vulnerability and a low capacity to respond to these events. It also noted that inequality, crime and violence, food insecurity, poor urban development planning, and weak or inoperative governance, among other factors, are risk drivers that can ultimately increase displacement. According to UNDRR, rather than witnessing new extreme weather events with negative impacts, countries in the region are already experiencing an extreme and systemic accumulation of risk that permeates the entire social, environmental, and territorial landscape (2021, p. 127).

As evidence of this, in 2025, the World Meteorological Organization warned that the past 10 years have been the warmest on record, with 2024 surpassing the 1.5 °C threshold (World Meteorological Organization, 2025). In Latin America and the Caribbean, this increase led in 2023 to extreme drought events linked to the El Niño phenomenon, which occurred in the Dry Corridor of Central America and northern South America. In the Brazilian Amazon, the Rio Negro dropped to its lowest water level in 120 years; the reduced water levels of the Panama Canal affected vessel transit. In Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina, water shortages were recorded in the La Plata basin. The transition from La Niña to the El Niño phenomenon in mid-2023 caused a significant shift in rainfall distribution, as many areas went from experiencing droughts or floods caused by La Niña phenomenon to facing the opposite effects (World Meteorological Organization, 2024).

In 2024, floods in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, affected more than 95% of municipalities in the state. An estimated 2.3 million people were impacted, with damage including the loss of housing, access to potable water, basic supplies, food, and other necessities. It

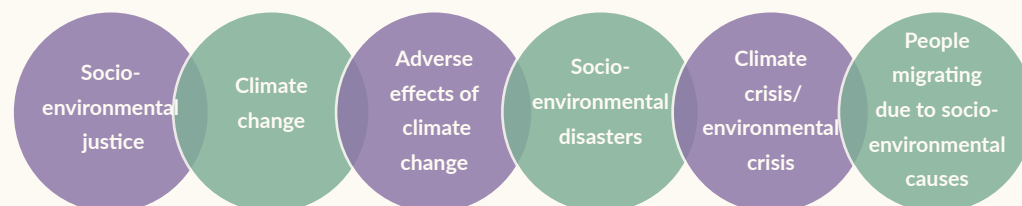
was also estimated that 2.7 million hectares of land lost fertility due to flooding (OCHA, 2024a). Meanwhile, Hurricane Beryl impacted several countries in the Caribbean, Central America, and the United States. In Jamaica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the potable water and electricity systems were affected, along with the capacity to provide healthcare and shelter (OCHA, 2024b). These events show that extreme phenomena will continue to occur in the region and that their consequences for people will increase significantly, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

Finally, it should be emphasized that migration governance in the Americas has focused on a restrictive approach that prioritizes containment, militarization, and the externalization of borders. In the absence of legal frameworks that guarantee the protection of the rights of individuals forced to cross borders due to socio-environmental causes and climate change—an issue that remains largely overlooked and poorly documented—their vulnerability is further exacerbated. They are doubly exposed: on the one hand, to the effects of disasters, conflicts, and climate change; and on the other, to the consequences of migration containment policies. This forces them to take more dangerous routes controlled by criminal groups, where they are exposed to violence such as enforced disappearance, extortion, theft of documents, kidnapping, sexual violence, and homicide, among others. Added to this is institutional violence by migration, police, or military authorities who criminalize them or violate the principles of non-refoulement and due process.

2. NAMING TO UNDERSTAND: CONCEPTUAL KEYS TO A COMPLEX CRISIS



To establish our position, it is essential to review the key terms that contribute to building the conceptual framework. On one hand, these include climate change, climate variability, and disasters. On the other hand, definitions of environmental and climate crises and their links to justice.



Climate Change, Climate Variability, and Disasters

There is a global consensus that understands **climate change** as large-scale alterations in climate parameters—temperature, precipitation, changes in oceanic and atmospheric currents, and sea-level rise—. These changes can occur naturally, due to major volcanic eruptions or variations in solar activity. However, since the 19th century, human activities have been the main driver, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas, which generate greenhouse gas emissions that trap solar heat and increase

temperatures. The main gases are carbon dioxide and methane. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “about half of the anthropogenic [human-induced] CO₂ emissions accumulated between 1750 and 2011 have been emitted in the last 40 years” (IPCC, 2014, p. 4).

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was established in 1992 during the “Rio Convention”⁷ with the objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. This Convention, which underpins the Conference of the Parties, commonly known as COP, defines climate change in Article 1, paragraph 2 as: “a change of climate attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (United Nations, 1992, p. 3).

This means that humans have become a modifying force of the climate system. For this reason, the scientific community has termed this new geological era the *Anthropocene*, which began in the late 18th century with the Industrial Revolution as a turning point, when the economy became dependent on machine labor powered by the burning of fossil fuels (Crutzen, 2002; Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000).

It is also crucial to understand this modifying force through a lens of differentiated responsibilities, meaning that specific population groups have greater impact and responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions. The Capitalocene proposes that “the climate is changing

as a result of global accumulation processes whose specific agents are capitalists and the political and ideological forces that have supported them.” (Navarro Trujillo & Linsalata, 2021, p. 7). These political and ideological forces help us understand that structural violences present in society, such as racism, gender-based violence, and structural inequality, among others, are connected to the production system, as will be further discussed.

Considering this, the consequences of these actions can be observed in the so-called **adverse effects of climate change**, understood as

changes in the physical environment or biota due to climate change that have significant adverse impacts on the composition, resilience, or productivity of natural or managed ecosystems, or on the functioning of socio-economic systems, or on human health and well-being (United Nations, 1992, p. 3).

In turn, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) conceptualizes the **impacts of climate change** as the consequences that materialize in human and natural systems, referring to “effects on lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services), and infrastructures. They may also be referred to as consequences or outcomes and may be adverse or beneficial.” (IPCC, 2022, p. 551).

Building on what Beatriz Felipe Pérez (2016) proposed, it is possible to classify the environmental and socio-economic consequences of climate change into four aspects:

1. Impacts on livelihood systems, public health, food security, and water availability due to the adverse effects of rising temperatures, climate variability, and other climate change effects.

⁷ The other two conventions emerging from Rio are the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. It now also incorporates the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

2. Through the intensification of disasters linked to sudden-onset or slow-onset natural phenomena, such as droughts, floods, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, among others.
3. Sea-level rise and coastal erosion, which render these areas uninhabitable.
4. Competition for natural resources, which leads to increased tensions and conflicts, and exacerbates environmental degradation.

An additional concept that must be clarified to address the climate discussion refers to **climate variability or natural climate variability**, a term mentioned in the definition of the Convention on Climate Change and its distinctions. According to Pabón (2021), climate variability refers to fluctuations in the prevailing atmospheric conditions of a region, which include extreme phases such as periods of higher-than-normal rainfall or unusually hot or cold periods. While climate is measured over long periods of 30–40 years, variability is measured in terms of extreme phases. Two measurement scales of variability are: i) seasonal: in mid-latitudes, it is linked to the sequence of the seasons—winter, spring, summer, and autumn—while in tropical latitudes, the alternation of rainy and dry seasons is most common; and ii) interannual: this scale correspond to variations that occur from year to year, for example, the perception that the rainy season is not always the same in a location from one year to the next. Other examples include phenomena framed within the El Niño-La Niña cycle.

In other words, climate variability phenomena are not equivalent to climate change; they have occurred and will continue to occur independently of human intervention and date back to time immemorial. However, climate change is modifying the prevailing conditions that influence the oscillation of climate variability. This



floods, impacting human and natural systems.

Finally, the concept of “disaster,” according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)⁸, is understood as a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with exposure, vulnerability, and capacity conditions, resulting in one or more of the following effects: human, material, economic, and environmental losses and impacts. Disaster effects can be immediate and localized but are often widespread and long-lasting. They may test or exceed the affected community’s or society’s ability to cope using its own resources and, therefore, may require external assistance, which could come from neighboring jurisdictions, national, or international sources.

Several debates have led to questioning the notion of “natural disasters,” which focuses on physical hazards as the sole causes of disasters, shifting instead toward a social interpretation of risk and disasters. Latin America has made a significant contribution to this interpretation with the concept of *socio-natural hazards*, which has opened the debate on the “non-natural” or non-technological construction of hazards and the role of human intervention in environmental degradation and, consequently, in the creation of such hazards (UNDRR, 2021, p. 15).

8 <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster>

In climate discussions, a distinction is made between slow-onset disasters and sudden-onset disasters:

Slow-onset disasters are those that evolve gradually as a result of progressive changes occurring over years or from increased frequency or intensity of recurrent events. Slow-onset disasters are linked to processes of environmental degradation such as droughts and desertification, increased salinization, sea-level rise, or thawing of permafrost (Intergenerational Network for Education in Emergencies, n.d. b).

A sudden-onset disaster is one “triggered by a hazardous event that emerges rapidly or unexpectedly. Sudden-onset disasters may be climate-related (for example, floods, cyclones, tornadoes) or geological phenomena (landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, or volcanic eruptions)” (Intergenerational Network for Education in Emergencies, n.d. a).

From a constructivist perspective, disaster is understood as the expression of a set of vulnerabilities and hazards where there is a social risk (Aznar-Crespo & Aledo, 2020). This means that, due to the structural conditions of economic, social, political, and cultural inequalities in which certain populations live at the time of occurrence of one of these phenomena, there is greater social risk. In this context, the impacts are shaped into a **socio-environmental disaster**, mediated both by structural conditions and by the human factors that have intervened in it.

Environmental Crisis, Climate Crisis, and Their Link to Justice

Although climate change, as previously explained, is an increasingly evident reality—even for those who have denied its existence—the contemporary environmental crisis goes far beyond

climate change and implies a broader social change agenda. The effects of the environmental crisis involve the accelerated loss of biodiversity due to species extinction, habitat destruction, depletion of the planet’s resources, and pollution. Beyond the ecological dimension, it also addresses the social and economic impacts.

According to environmental historian Germán Palacio (2013), before climate change “occupied the front pages of the media, international discourse, public policies, and political rhetoric, we were already aware of the severe environmental crisis we were experiencing. Climate change is just one more chapter.” (p. 69). For this reason,

critical Latin American environmentalism should not defend nature—or aspects of it—as something ontologically separate from human behavior, beliefs, or socio-political action. Instead, it should maintain its environmental justice agenda, linking these concerns to its own issues, including those conventionally associated with social struggles: labor security and justice; a healthy environment; better land distribution and respect for ancestral territories, among others. It should also link them with the socio-environmental agenda, which includes: free access to minimum potable water; the protection and use of biodiversity, with recognition of local and Indigenous knowledge; historical environmental debt; green cities and jobs; alternative, non-hazardous, non-fossil energy sources; green and fair trade; and food autonomy and sovereignty, among others. If the defense of nature and Earth becomes disconnected from social concerns, the environmental agenda will remain confined to the elites of nature protectors or to neutral scientists who are not committed to the social dimensions of the environmental crisis. (pp. 71–72)

A broader understanding of society–nature relations lead us to observe that the anthropogenic actions identified by the IPCC are framed within the capitalist development model. Therefore, examining the causes and effects of climate change on the continent requires uncovering the inequalities and injustices arising from the very system itself and from its modes of appropriation and transformation of nature, as highlighted in the perspective of the Capitalocene.

This is why the reality of Latin America compels us to critically examine economic development and its impacts on the environment and communities from a **Socio-Environmental Justice** perspective, understood by the Grupo de Ecología Integral of CPAL (2021) as “all those actions that seek to contribute to overcoming the injustices present in our historical heritage and reproduced by the current extractive and financial development model, which generates social inequalities and unspeakable environmental harm” (p. 10). The main references for this commitment to Socio-Environmental Justice are found in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which call us to rethink the Care for Our Common Home through the complexity of the interconnections between social, economic, and environmental issues from an Integral Ecology perspective, and the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, which frames such care as care for the “We,” grounded in a moral commitment to humanity.

On the other hand, although **Climate Justice** is essentially a specific application of Environmental Justice, it has distinctive features. According to Pardo Buendía (2018), first, it frames climate change as an ethical, social, and political issue rather than merely a physical or natural phenomenon. Second, it includes not only current generations but also future ones. Additionally, it incorporates precautionary principles in light of the unpredictability of future events and seeks to promote a restorative justice approach.

However, one of the limitations of climate justice is the need to differentiate the diversity present in the facts, as well as in the scales of the causes, impacts, and consequences of climate change. Added to this is the difficulty of, at times, establishing clear cause-and-effect relationships and, therefore, pinpointing responsibilities with precision.



Lastly,

climate justice assumes that those who are least responsible for climate change are, paradoxically, the ones who suffer its most severe consequences. Amid the various (and, notably, unequal) discussions and negotiations that have taken place in the climate field, the concept of ecological debt was coined in South America in the 1990s, during the external debt crisis affecting various developing countries. **Ecological debt**⁹ is a broader notion in relation to climate and other environmental issues, particularly those concerning the extraction of natural resources (Pardo Buendía & Ortega, 2018, p. 95).

Building on the definitions of socio-environmental and climate justice, the region's structural inequalities are exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change, while at the same time being di-

⁹ Pope Francis takes up the idea of debt in *Laudato Si'*, see paragraphs 51 and 52.

rectly connected to the extractivist development model based on the burning of fossil fuels —the main drivers of climate change—. A model that dispossesses and devastates territories, many of them turned into racial sacrifice zones, further increases environmental deterioration, and renders certain areas uninhabitable, restricting the right to a healthy environment and heightening the multi-causality of forced migration in the region.



A study conducted by Ruta del Clima (2023) provides a brief historical overview of the concept of extractivism and how it has been used to describe the mode of economic production implemented since the colonization processes. It explains that this concept also acknowledges the existence of global systemic dynamics in which labor exploitation and the extraction of common goods from the colonial periphery are used as raw materials in industrial processes elsewhere. Thus, it continues by connecting with the arguments of several authors, defining extractivism as “an intensive mode of exploitation, a mentality of appropriation, and a logic of commodification of human and non-human nature.” (Ruta del Clima, 2023, p. 13).

This report highlights elements that are important to our position.

First, the extractive practice is tied to the capitalist system, which requires “infinite” physical resources and is therefore linked to a wide range of dispossession practices. In this regard, geographer David Harvey (2007) has described this type of relationship between exploitation and dispossession as accumulation by dispossession, noting that in order to reproduce itself, capital must rely on a permanent process of dispossession.

Second, these dynamics lead to a territorial restructuring of social relations and institutions, as the development model governs production, accumulation, and extraction. Third, the model entails imbalances of energy and non-human ma-

terials that deteriorate the social and ecological conditions that sustain life (Ruta del Clima, 2023). This way of understanding extractivism leads to another important definition to keep in mind: **socio-environmental conflicts**, which are understood as:



“[...] a relationship of struggle and confrontation within the framework of an extractive project, in which, on one side, communities and social groups defending the land and territory interact with, on the other side, State institutions and private actors—primarily companies or business consortia, but also criminal groups—all motivated by capitalist interests.” (Hernández Alvarado, *et.al.*, 2024, p. 105-106)

Hernández Alvarado et al. (2024) also point out that most conflicts result in territorial consequences such as the breakdown of social fabric, territorial dispossession, population displacement, and the violation of human rights, as well as the ecological degradation associated with the extractive projects being implemented. In short, extractivism and its consequences—such as socio-environmental conflicts—entail a redefinition of the use, control, and meaning of territory, along with their corresponding social and environmental costs in both the short and long term (Göbel & Ulloa, 2014). One of these costs, which we must analyze, is linked to population displacement and forced migration.

Paradoxically, in the coming years, there will likely be an increase in cases of communities being displaced and affected by projects linked to the energy transition, whether due to the extractivism of coveted minerals such as lithium¹⁰, or the demand for land for green projects such as wind energy initiatives. This also includes climate change mitigation initiatives such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) projects, which particularly threaten the forests inhabited by peasant, Afro-descendant, and Indigenous communities¹¹.

Considering all of the above, our position is grounded in socio-environmental justice, which encompasses the struggles for climate justice and the perspective of the Capitalocene. This framework broadens our regional understanding of both present and future realities regarding the drivers that lead people to move due to socio-environmental disasters and conflicts, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change.

10 See: <https://co.boell.org/es/2020/05/08/litio-los-costos-sociales-y-ambientales-de-la-transicion-energetica-global>

11 See: <https://co.boell.org/es/2020/05/08/litio-los-costos-sociales-y-ambientales-de-la-transicion-energetica-global>

3. WOUNDED TERRITORIES, VIOLATED RIGHTS: CONSEQUENCES ON HUMAN FACES



Violated Human Rights

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2009), since 1990 the first IPCC report has considered migration as one of the effects of climate change, resulting from i) disasters related to meteorological phenomena such as hurricanes and floods; ii) the gradual deterioration of the environment and slow-onset disasters such as desertification or the subsidence of coastal areas; iii) disaster risks that entail the resettlement of people outside high-risk areas; and iv) violence and social unrest attributable to climate change-related factors.

The same report recognizes several rights that may be violated as a result of climate change, including:

- The right to life
- The right to water
- The right to health
- The right to adequate food
- The right to adequate housing

- The right to self-determination
- The right to remain, understood as the right to freedom of movement and to choose one's residence

This is only an indicative list, as international human rights law continues to evolve, incorporating other rights such as education and culture. New rights have also emerged; for example, In October 2021, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations recognized the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a universal human right through Resolution 48/13¹².

As might be expected, the violation of several of the aforementioned human rights, combined with other factors such as violence, poverty, and insecurity, among others, make migration for socio-environmental reasons multi-causal, heterogeneous, and, in many cases, invisible. Some of the impacts identified by Caritas Internationalis (2023, pp. 29–31) include:

- Those linked to the trauma of abandoning a territory with which individuals maintain a physical and spiritual connection.
- Precarious conditions in which they experienced the effects of climate change, in which they are forced to move, and, in many cases, in which they are resettled.
- The disintegration of households.
- Discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking.

12 See: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/climatechange/information-materials/r2heinfofinalweb-sp.pdf>. A second Resolution 48/14 draws attention to the impacts of climate change on human rights and establishes a Special Rapporteur dedicated specifically to this issue. This is important to recognize the disproportionate impacts on some marginalized social groups and on environmental defenders.

- Conflict, violence, and successive movements.
- Irregular border crossings.
- Facing deportation.

Another key element for the analysis is the temporality of impacts. In the short term, consequences include the loss of housing, roads, contaminated water, food insecurity, and loss of economic capital, in addition to the violence individuals may experience during displacement. In the medium term, the economic repercussions contribute to the worsening of the population's socioeconomic conditions due to the inability to recover their livelihoods, which in turn may lead to new cycles of forced migrations.

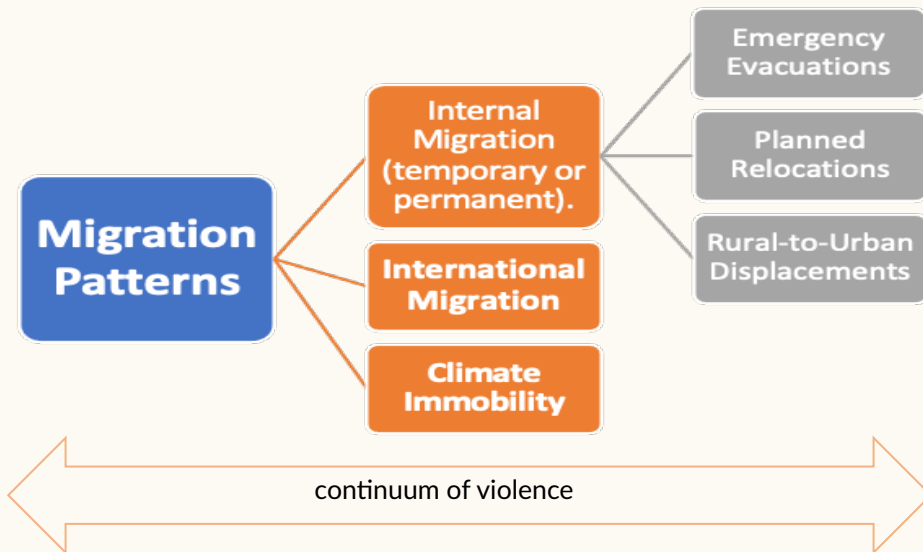
In the medium and long term, it can be observed that populations often experience uncertainty and psychological trauma due to the possibility of repeated socio-environmental disasters, especially in the absence of substantial progress in environmental protection and policy responses to address this displacement reality. In the long term, there may be populations unable to return to their territories because they have become uninhabitable, leading to uprooting.

Migration Patterns and Intersectionality

When speaking of **people forced to move due to socio-environmental conflicts and disasters, as well as the adverse effects of climate change**, we refer to those undertaking forced, multi-causal, temporary, or permanent movements, whether planned or emergency-related. Although they are the ones who contribute the least to the global crisis, they experience the violations and impacts of the ecological crisis, resulting from a variety of situations that degrade Mother Earth and, coupled with multiple poli-

tical and economic factors, pressure them to abandon their homes or, in some cases, prevent them from leaving them (Felipe Pérez B., 2018).

When examining how these impacts are experienced, different **patterns of displacement and migration** emerge: i) emergency evacuations, planned relocations, and temporary or permanent internal displacement; ii) rural-to-urban displacements; iii) international migration; and iv) situations of climate immobility, understood as situations in which affected individuals are unable to leave their territories, thereby facing heightened vulnerability regarding the protection and fulfillment of their human rights.



Another identified pattern is the **continuum of violence**¹³, which refers to the multiple harms and threats to integrity, security, and freedom experienced by those displaced from their territories.

¹³ See the position paper: <https://www.redjesuitaconmigranteslac.org/post/atender-las-nuevas-causas-de-la-migraci%C3%B3n-forzada-encuentro-rjm-y-aliadas-sobre-las-intersecciones>

This applies, for example, to individuals who are both victims of violence and of climate-related events. Additionally, it manifests in territorial disputes, lack of access to justice, migration containment measures, geographical marginalization in destination areas, criminalization, and persecution, among others. Throughout this ongoing violence across the entire migration cycle, States, organized crime, armed groups, and economic actors, among others, contribute to the conditions that increase people's vulnerability. The continuum of violence shows the overlapping injustices.

Considering this, whenever possible, the right to remain, the right not to migrate, must be upheld, as it is key to understanding that actions should not only focus on mobility itself, but also on ensuring that people are not forced to move. This requires a comprehensive approach to structural inequalities from a socio-environmental and climate justice perspective.

It should also be noted that, for some climate actors, migration may be considered a form of adaptation, and they promote planned relocations as a response, an issue addressed in the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on Internal Displacement, as presented below.

As mentioned earlier, there is a structure of inequalities that affects this reality, which is why it is necessary to work from an intersectional perspective. As Andrea Rigon (2020) points out:

In the context of the climate crisis, inequalities are evident in 1) the impacts of climate change, 2) the differentiated contribution of countries, sectors, and social groups to climate change, 3) the capacity and resources available to adapt, and 4) the impacts of adaptation and mitigation actions. **These inequities affect individuals differently depending on their intersectional identities.** (Emphasis added, p. 1)

Therefore, when analyzing this reality in order to take action, it is necessary to recognize the historical power dynamics affecting marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic groups, and LGBTQI+ communities, among others, whose marginalization is exacerbated during the migration cycle. Likewise, there is a differentiated impact on individuals who are environmental and territorial defenders, whose lives and safety may be threatened not only by socio-environmental factors but also by violence or persecution directed at them and their work.

4. TESTIMONIES FROM LATIN AMERICA: THREE TERRITORIES, ONE SHARED STRUGGLE



During the internal meeting held in November 2024, three cases from the region were presented, illustrating the intersection of forced migration, socio-environmental justice, and the care for our Common Home. These cases show the causes of displacement, the consequences and impacts faced by people, the type of displacement identified, the response from government institutions, and the actions undertaken by each Jesuit organization to address this reality. This section presents the specificities of each country and territory, while also highlighting the common elements regarding how climate change affects patterns of forced migration, increasing vulnerability and threats to human rights. The three cases are described below:

Guapinol Case in Honduras: Displacement Due to Extractive Projects

In the northern region of the country, a socio-environmental conflict exists between the communities near the Guapinol River and the Pinares mining company. In the accompaniment carried out by ERIC – Radio Progreso with eight communities, it was identified that these conflicts arise from the development of extractive projects that threaten both livelihoods and the right to access water. As part of this accompaniment, an analysis has been conducted on the impacts experienced by the communities and the factors influencing the migration of people. The first finding is that these

communities face two main consequences: the presence of extractive projects and periods of extreme droughts and floods. At the same time, the following causes of displacement were identified:

1. Threats from various actors against human rights defenders, Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities opposing the project, as well as criminalization by the State.
2. Land dispossession by projects where the community is settled in areas of interest to the company.
3. Economic insecurity and violence unleashed as a result of the project.
4. Policies and practices causing environmental deterioration and affecting communities' livelihoods, such as water pollution from mining, logging, and deforestation of micro-watersheds, among others.

Another significant finding concerns the latent dangers that these projects pose to communities, threatening their rights to life, freedom, integrity, livelihoods, and, in general, their Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (ESCER). Under this scenario, the following mobility patterns were identified:

1. Temporary internal displacement.
2. Internal migration.
3. Resettlement programs.
4. Forced migration.
5. Asylum seekers or potential asylum seekers opting for migration routes.

Regarding the responses from the State, a high level of corruption and impunity is evident, highlighting that the progress made in the environmental cause is the result of the hard work of the communities. They are exposed to risks while defending their territory, while the State does not have any effective protection programs in place. For this reason, the international advocacy efforts of these communities have been central in highlighting the impacts they face and advancing responses that the State fails to provide.

ERIC – Radio Progreso provides direct support to cases of internal displacement, resettlement, asylum, and forced migration. Efforts have focused on developing a strategy to address the underlying conflict, aiming to protect human rights defenders and ensure access to justice through repair and non-repetition. Additionally, the case has been brought to the attention of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Climate Change and Internal Displacement Rapporteurships, as well as thematic hearings on dispossession. Currently, precautionary measures before the IACHR are in place, aimed at addressing the socio-environmental conflict at its core while making its impacts, including displacement, visible.

Continuum of Violence and Dual Impact in Northern Cauca, Colombia

Northern Cauca, due to its location near border areas, has historically been considered a strategic territory by various actors. Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, and various armed groups driven by illegal economies live there.

This territory has also been a convergence point for multiple socio-environmental conflicts. Since the 1980s, major problems have arisen related to illicit coca and marijuana cultivation. In addition,

tion, significant mining activities take place throughout the Cauca River basin. This has generated disputes among different actors over territorial control, armed confrontations in areas inhabited by Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations, contributing to the impoverishment of local communities and limited access to livelihoods, as well as cultural disruptions to traditional ways of life, facilitating the involvement of people in activities linked to illegal economies as a survival strategy. All these phenomena function as drivers of migration, particularly internal migration.

State responses to situations where multiple displacement factors converge have been characterized by highly specific interventions when serious incidents are reported. However, there is no evidence of structural prevention or protection measures.

The work conducted by Universidad Javeriana, particularly through the Instituto Intercultural Cali, has focused on strengthening community-rooted dynamics to enable people to remain in their territories, such as:

1. Capacity building.
2. Territorialized assessments and actions that recognize the factors shaping the territory, current capacities and limitations, and future visions and opportunities.
3. Conflict transformation through dialogue.
4. Economic sustainability and productive projects based on a relational approach with the territory, in contrast to a purely productivist perspective, aimed at fostering territorial attachment.

Displacement Due to Disasters: Flooding in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

The floods, which affected 440 municipalities, representing 95% of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, were the result of the absence of a prevention, mitigation, and response plan to address climate variability, whose intensity is amplified by climate change, leading to a socio-environmental disaster. Between April and May 2024, the rains associated with the El Niño phenomenon began. However, precipitation intensified significantly. Combined with anthropogenic factors, such as poor maintenance of containment dikes and the lack of action plans to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, this ultimately caused impacts not only in material terms but also on the affected population.

The floods impacted both housing and public infrastructure, resulting in the closure of the Porto Alegre airport for five months, school closures across various municipalities, and the destruction of homes that left approximately 6,500 people homeless. Additionally, public health issues emerged, including contamination of dams and water sources, leaving 34,519 families without access to potable water, increased risk of disease and pests, and the absence of medical equipment, hospitals, and health centers to meet the demand.

These impacts generated a series of human rights concerns, including the loss of housing and lack of access to rights such as health, education, and a healthy environment.

A central aspect is that the areas most affected by the floods were those built on land unsuitable for housing. This highlights how the situation also increased the socio-economic vulnerability of populations already experiencing structural inequalities.

Among the migration patterns identified as a result of this phenomenon, it was found that internal migration predominates. However, there are some cases of cross-border migration and cases of immobility population that do not have the capacity to migrate. The causes of these migrations have been:

1. Prolonged droughts affecting agriculture and water security.
2. Flooding due to intense rainfall.
3. Deforestation and forest fires.
4. Ecosystem alterations that reduce livelihoods.

Regarding the response from federal and state governments, it is important to emphasize that this situation is not the result of a rainfall disaster, but rather the consequence of decades of institutional negligence in addressing a problem that has been forecasted since the historic Porto Alegre flood in 1941. Added to this are ignored warnings, uncontrolled urbanization, inadequate disaster response, and minimal attention to victims, leaving them at constant risk of revictimization.

Currently, in Brazil, there is a need to advance in the development of adequate infrastructure as part of long-term prevention plans, as well as the creation of contingency plans as comprehensive strategies to address similar situations in the future.

Common Elements

As noted throughout the text, despite the particularities of each territory, there are common elements that can be understood from a socio-environmental justice perspective, where the structural violence and inequalities experienced by people are evident. Therefore, reviewing these cases allows us to identify shared elements, such as:

- Multicausal impacts.
- The simultaneous violation of various rights affecting the same populations, the continuum of violence. In this way, migrating people are subjected to multiple forms of violence that deepen their vulnerability and hinder the restoration of their rights.
- The lack of an effective response from States to existing problems. In some cases, the State itself may even be one of the actors that exacerbates these issues.
- Rootedness as a fundamental factor in the struggles of the people and populations we work with. In cases of immobility, the focus is not only on the ability to migrate but also on guaranteeing the right to remain in territories with full rights protection.

Additionally, regarding the different mobility patterns identified during the 2024 meeting, we were able to synthesize the following regional trends:

CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

- Security forces as a threat in places of origin, transit, and destination.
- Accumulation of violence and rights violations affecting the same population. New impacts associated with structural inequality and migration containment policies.
- Environmental motives covered under the economic “umbrella.” e.g., extractive projects.
- Pattern associated with one or more incidents of internal displacement.
- In areas unprepared to host people, migration can generate unforeseen environmental impacts that may lead to new socio-environmental conflicts.

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

- Invisibilization of socio-environmental factors as mobility drivers.
- Existence of triad—Company, State, and Organized Crime—as a mobility factor in extractive projects.
- Displacement due to environmental reasons (resource and food depletion; contamination; disasters) causing impacts on other fundamental rights.
- Criminalization and stigmatization of community leaders.
- Differential impacts on more vulnerable populations make recovery more difficult.

OTHER CROSS- CUTTING ELEMENTS

- Absence of prevention and response plans and policies for environmental risks.
- Forced returns / failed migration attempts.
- Specific population groups in displacement. For example, youth.
- Impunity.

IMMOBILITY

- Communities in vulnerable areas, settled there after a displacement, with limited access to livelihoods.
- Ethnic territories threatened by extractive projects.
- Territorial rootedness / Desire to remain.
- Being trapped in high-risk areas.
- Lack of affirmative actions by the State.
- Refugees in destination countries affected by climate change.
- Dual residency.



Conclusions

The climate crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be understood in isolation, but rather in dialogue with the deep social, economic, and political inequalities that cut across the region. Climate change, socio-environmental disasters, and land-related conflicts are forcing thousands of people to leave their homes. This migration is not voluntary but a desperate response to the loss of livelihoods, environmental violence, the lack of guarantees to remain, and the absence of effective protection policies.

Through conceptual analysis, evidence of rights violations, and case studies in Honduras, Colombia, and Brazil, this document shows how forced migration driven by climate and socio-environmental factors is marked by injustice. Those who have contributed the least to global warming are the ones facing the harshest consequences. Moreover, state responses are often insufficient or even repressive, further deepening the vulnerability and exclusion of affected communities.

In light of this reality, it is urgent to move toward a socio-environmental justice approach that recognizes the right to remain in territories with dignity and guarantees, while also protecting those who are forced to migrate. A transformation of the development model based on extractivism is required, as well as legal frameworks that acknowledge new forms of displacement. This report is an invitation to address the crisis at its structural roots, to listen to the voices of the communities, and to act with responsibility, solidarity, and commitment to caring for our Common Home.

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