



Research Article

Emergence of a Regional Climate Refugee Protocol in South Asia: A Practical Antidote to Climate Induced Displacement

Md. Shamim Ahmed, Lamia Dilshad Waziha*

Department of Law, Bangladesh Army International University of Science and Technology (BAIUST), Cumilla-3500, Bangladesh.

***Correspondence**

Lamia Dilshad Waziha

Email: lamia.law@baiust.ac.bd**Article History****Received:** June 30, 2025**Accepted:** August 21, 2025**Published:** September 2, 2025**Citation**

Ahmed, M. S., & Waziha, L. D. (2025). Emergence of a Regional Climate Refugee Protocol in South Asia: A Practical Antidote to Climate Induced Displacement. *International Social Research Nexus (ISRN)*, 1(3), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.63539/isrn.2025015>

Copyright

© 2025 The Author (s). Published by Scholar Cave. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).



Abstract

South Asia is faced with a unique climate challenge due to its geographical realities, exposing clear vulnerabilities. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka face severe risks from rising sea levels and coastal flooding on their shores. Landlocked states like Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan must deal with the consequences of melting glaciers in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas. In the meantime, many parts of the Maldives may become uninhabitable for sea level rises looming over the low-lying regions. Millions are currently internally displaced in these countries, with projections indicating significant cross-border movements. However, existing legal or paralegal frameworks offer inadequate protection and recognition to the matter. International refugee law and regional conventions cover forced migration in some contexts, but there is currently no explicit provision that sets international and binding legal frameworks or legal status to protect and assist persons displaced by climate change in South Asia. This paper examines the phenomenon of climate-induced displacement and its patterns in South Asia. It also maps international and regional laws pertaining to displacement as well as identifies key deficiencies by utilizing legal doctrinal research to examine these lacunae critically; hence underscoring the urgency of a regional climate refugee protocol. Drawing from case studies of other regional frameworks, the paper proposes that a rights-based, legally binding protocol would offer a cooperative framework for protection to the vulnerable people in this context. Moreover, recommendations for policy initiatives are provided to help guide future regional cooperation for this cross border protective mechanism.

Keywords

Climate-Induced Displacement, Legal Status, Regional Protection, Cross Border Migration, South Asia.

1. Introduction

Climate change is the preeminent global crisis confronting humanity in the 21st century, profoundly impacting civil liberties, security, and sustainable progress (Abbass et al., 2022). Its far-reaching impacts, including swelling sea levels, catastrophic weather events, and altered precipitation patterns, are compelling an unprecedented mass migration on a global scale (Masud et al., 2023). South Asia stands as one of the most climate-vulnerable regions worldwide, with a spectrum of rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, fast-melting glaciers, and intensifying extreme weather events

(Scott & Salamanca, 2020). The South Asian countries, such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, are liable to present floods, cyclones, droughts, and sea-level rise phenomena. They are densely populated, depend extensively on the climate-sensitive agricultural and fishery sectors and have limited adaptive capacity (Jolly et al., 2024).

Most importantly, climate change is becoming known to trigger human displacement. Indeed, floods in Bangladesh, riverbank erosion in Nepal and India, drought in certain provinces of Pakistan, and saltwater intrusion in coastal areas are pushing people to move, often repeatedly. While this form of displacement is arriving at speeds and scales that are dramatically new in South Asia, current refugee law is plainly inadequate. The 1951 Refugee Convention and related international treaties clearly govern only those fleeing for their lives due to specific forms of persecution; climate-induced displacement, by its nature, does not fit within the grounds for refugee status as outlined in these various documents (Alimuddin and Muhammad, 2023). There is no legal definition of what constitutes a climate migrant meaning that there is no framework to grant them formal protection, recognition or access to basic rights and humanitarian assistance (Milán-García et al., 2021). International frameworks acknowledge climate change as a migration driver but they remain non-binding, and lack enforceable provisions or new legal categories targeted at refugees of the climatic kind. At the national level, there is a paradigm of capitalist laws that deal with disaster response and immediate relief rather than facilitated relocation or legal status for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) which leads to fragmented and insufficient protections (Afroz Smriti, 2024). The missing legal framework for climate-induced displacement in South Asia is, therefore, a significant obstacle to protecting displaced groups.

The aim of this research is to critically evaluate the state and international legal frameworks that underpin climate-induced migration in South Asia along with gaps and deficiencies. This study evaluates through protection under international agreements such as 1951 Refugee Convention and that of privileged South-Asian countries home-grown disaster management laws. The paper then analyses critically a possibility of establishing a South Asian Climate Refugee Protocol with the evidence from regional instruments like Kampala Convention. In doing so, it provides detailed legal and policy suggestions to better protect the rights of people forced to move in response to climate impacts, focusing on the critical need for regional cooperation and burden sharing. This research explores the phenomenon of climate-induced displacement and its implications in South Asia. The series focuses on how migration influences societies, economies and politics, gauging the effectiveness of existing governance mechanisms. The study reviews international and regional legal frameworks for displacement, and identifies large chasms in content. Climate migrants are not covered by current refugee law, nor has response in the sphere of regional cooperation been broad or effective.

Through legal doctrinal research, the paper addresses these lacunae in an expositive sense and argues for regional climate refugee protocol. It draws on regional frameworks case studies. It suggests that a rights-based legal protocol would offer an alternative way of managing frontiers and protecting those in need, in cooperation. The paper concludes that Bangladesh, given both its vulnerability and leadership role in climate advocacy, is well-suited to lead the development of such a protocol. Finally, the conclusion also proposes some policy recommendations and future directions for regional cooperation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptualizing Climate-Induced Displacement

The discourse surrounding appropriate terminology for climate-induced displacement is complex with conflicting perspectives. Depending on the chosen term, it carries substantial legal and practical implications for affected populations. While researchers have proposed multiple terms, there remains no consensus (Zetter, 2017). This lack of agreement influences the rights and protections granted to displaced communities under international law (Gemenne et al., 2022). Moving forward, further discussion is still needed to settle on a term that adequately captures the nuances of this issue without compromising displaced peoples' access to support and resources.

2.1.1. Terminology: "Climate Migrant," "Climate Refugee," "Environmentally Displaced Person"

The most prevalent terminology in widespread discourse, "climate refugee," has attained traction due to its evocative might in highlighting the compelling nature of movement (Marlowe & Offner, 2021). Academicians and international law practitioners essentially concur even though that this terminology is a misnomer in the strict authorized sense (Askland et al., 2022). The 1951 Refugee Convention (and its 1967 Protocol), the cornerstone of worldwide refugee law, narrowly specifies a refugee as an individual fleeing persecution primarily based on race, religion, nationality, membership of a specific social group, or political belief (Burkett & Lyster, 2018). Climate-induced displacement, whilst often resulting in serious hardship and life-threatening circumstances, will not generally involve persecution by a state or non-state actor in the manner codified by the Convention (Ayeb-Karlsson et al., 2022). This fundamental definitional mismatch implies

that individuals displaced solely by environmental elements tend not to qualify for refugee standing and thus usually are not entitled to the particular protections beneath the Convention, together with the precept of non-refoulement (Durieux, 2016).

As a consequence, alternative phrases have emerged to precisely mirror the character of those movements. “Climate migrant” is broadly used, proposing that individuals move owing to climate-related components, often together with a degree of choice, even if constrained (Lulić et al., 2023). This term frequently encompasses voluntary and involuntary movements exactly where climate change acts as a substantial push factor. Even so, critics argue that the word ‘migrant’ may downplay the involuntary and usually compelled mother nature of displacement, implying a choice when such a choice seldom exists, specifically for individuals facing immediate life threats from abrupt-onset disasters or inhabitation problems from slow-onset activities (Lulić et al., 2023).

The issues surrounding how to categorize and support those displaced due to environmental threats are complex with legal and humanitarian implications. Terms such as “environmentally displaced person” aim to acknowledge the plight of those compelled to leave home permanently or temporarily when changing climate renders their living situation untenable, and through a lacking in precise definition (Borges, 2018). More recently, the Nansen Initiative and Platform on Disaster Displacement adopted the phrase “persons displaced across international borders in context of disasters and climate change,” which describes the phenomenon without attempting to establish a new legal status comparable to refugee (Gemenne et al., 2022).

However, without universal consensus on an agreed upon, legally binding designation, developing specific protections for individuals impacted remains an ongoing challenge. The absence of a designated status when crossing international lines in search of refuge means individuals often slip through cracks, potentially facing deprivation of basic rights as well as statelessness or deportation in host countries (McGoldrick, 2022). While undeniably climate crisis forces migration, lack of an all-encompassing and codified term hinders crafting of clear obligations and safeguards for affected populations’ wellbeing and livelihoods in the aftermath of leaving places and communities- which have been their homes, even whole lives priorly.

2.1.2. Typologies of Displacement

Climate-induced displacement takes on various manifestations, each with unique challenges requiring customized remedies (Ghaly, 2021). Comprehending these typologies is pivotal to crafting effective legal and policy solutions.

- *Sudden-onset vs. Slow-onset Displacement:* Sudden-onset displacement involves rapid, sometimes massive population movements spurred by extreme weather like cyclones, flooding, tsunamis or earthquakes (Oliver-Smith, 2019). In Bangladesh, this is exemplified by communities escaping promptly after a cyclone strikes the coast or a river overflows its banks (Kabir, 2018). While the immediate humanitarian response to such events is relatively established (e.g. emergency shelters, food aid), the prolonged displacement and risk of recurrent displacement often result in protracted crises (Hossain et al., 2021). On the other hand, slow-onset displacement stems from slow environmental degradation such as sea level rise, desertification, rising salinity, or chronic river erosion. This type of displacement is frequently less visible and more multifaceted, as it involves a creeping loss of livelihoods and inhabitability over years or even decades. The decision to relocate might appear voluntary but is often a forced choice as circumstances become unsustainable. For example, farmers in coastal Bangladesh abandoning their lands due to saline intrusion, or riverine communities repeatedly losing their homes to erosion, represent Slow-onset displacement. Legal frameworks regularly struggle more with Slow-onset displacement, as the direct ‘trigger’ is less obvious than a sudden disaster, complicating the attribution of responsibility and the timing of intervention.
- *Internal vs. Cross-border Displacement:* Internal displacement refers to movements inside national borders (Hampton, 2013). By far, the vast majority of climate-induced displacement globally and locally in Bangladesh is internal. Those displaced internally by climate change are considered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and fall under the authority of national sovereignty. While the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) provide a framework, they are nonbinding, leaving national governments primarily responsible for helping their IDPs. Challenges for Bangladesh include rapid urbanization, strain on urban infrastructure and difficulties providing long-term assistance and integration for displaced populations (McNeill et al., 2022). On the other hand, cross-border displacement refers to movements across international lines (Drotbohm & Winters, 2018). Projections suggest a significant surge in cross-border climate migration in the future, especially from extremely vulnerable regions like South Asia, even if such movement is less common immediately following climate events (Balsari et al., 2020). This type of displacement poses the greatest legal challenge as these individuals lack the

status of 'refugees' and are often subject to immigration laws neglecting environmental drivers. The lack of a specific legal category for cross-border climate-displaced persons leaves them highly susceptible to arbitrary detention, rejection and statelessness (Balsari et al., 2020).

- *Temporary vs. Permanent Displacement:* Temporary displacement occurs when individuals depart their homes briefly and can return once the direct threat passes (e.g. after a flood recedes or cyclone concludes) (Mallick & Vogt, 2014). This frequently involves emergency shelters and short-term relief aid. However, permanent displacement results when people are unable to return to live safely in their original areas due to irreversible environmental changes (Bernzen et al., 2019).

2.2. Climate-Induced Displacement in South Asia

South Asia is already one of the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change, with displacement from rising sea levels, floods, cyclones and other environmental hazards embedded in its past (Seddiki, 2024). Clear empirical data and case examples from Bangladesh, Maldives and coastal India needs to be presented before the readers to show urgency for the need of a regional climate refugee protocol. It may be the front-line state in the climate crisis called Bangladesh. According to the Global Internal Displacement Report 2025, published by the Norway-based International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), about 2.4 million people were displaced in Bangladesh in 2024. The previous year, in 2023, the figure stood at approximately 1.8 million, when Bangladesh also ranked fifth globally. In addition, the displacement is compounded by slower-onset effects such as riverbank erosion and salinization, which may cause internal or cross-border displacement for some 20 million Bangladeshis by 2050 (Clement et al., 2021). The southwestern coast, including Sundarbans delta, experiences higher salinity that challenges agriculture and water availability, making rural population flock to slum areas in Dhaka or Chittagong or any other city. Rapid population influxes into these cities often overstretch the capacities of such urban centers resulting in overcrowding, formation of informal settlements and social marginalization (Fahim & Arefin, 2023).

The Maldives are suffering from the impacts of climate change. Sea-level rise is one of the biggest existential risks that faces 26 atolls making up the island nation of the Maldives (Woodworth, 2005). Svalbard has a tiny aggregate population yet future sea-level rises there put habitability at serious risk even for a marginal increase (United Nations Expert, 2024). Authorities have recognized the potential for displacement in the future and are exploring new approaches to planned relocation, both within and outside its borders (Stojanov, 2017). Some low-lying islands could become uninhabitable by mid-century, leading to people being forced across borders a situation for which there is no clear international law or institutionally accepted solutions (Rasheed, 2025).

Many regions of coastal India, in states such as West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are particularly vulnerable to cyclones, storm surges and sea level rise (Kantamaneni et al., 2022). Sundarbans, the coastal area of India are several washes with erosion and it displaces thousands every year. The India State of Forest Report 2020 notes that significant land loss has occurred here. In Odisha alone, more than 2 million people were displaced due to the cyclones and floods between 2015 and 2020. As a result, many of the displaced are pushed into peri-urban zones with inadequate habitation and minimal services financed through illegal means, often without formal acknowledgment or protection by law (Gupta et al., 2025).

Together these figures underscore the magnitude and complexity of climate displacement in South Asia. They have shed light on how existing legal and policy frameworks often fail to meet the needs of displaced communities, whether within national borders or beyond them. This includes bringing data like this into the policy conversation and building the evidence base for a regional climate refugee protocol to identify these populations, protect them, and coordinate regional responses.

2.3. Trends and Patterns of Internal and Cross Border Displacement in South Asia

South Asia is experiencing both sudden-onset and slow onset forms of climate-induced displacement. There are storms on this scale that can displace tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands or millions in the space of a few days, and these big rapid-onset disaster-displacements often involve cyclones, floods or landslides (Hossain et al., 2021). Both together in 2020, nearby with Cyclone Amphan caused the relocation of more than 4.9 million individuals across India and Bangladesh. The similar communities displaced on a seasonal and recurring basis, suffers equally from flooding of the Brahmaputra and Indus rivers respectively (Gupta et al., 2025). While others, for instance slow-onset processes such as desertification in some parts of Pakistan and India or salinity in coastal Bangladesh prompted a slower but permanent migration. It's rare to see displacement in tiny increments as families move by hairbreadths of a mile into the city, or

sputtering across national borders, seeking jobs and safety. This same migration, in turn, blurs the distinction between voluntary and forced movement of people, rendering policy responses to achieve a solution harder still (Majeed Salik et al., 2020).

Internal displacement of people within state borders is the most common form, usually referred to as moving from rural to urban areas. Millions inhabit mega-cities that are now located on prime land for rapidly evolving extreme weather, while the informal settlements they cast their eyes upon suddenly triple or quadruple as climate displaced persons from rural hit (Almulhim et al., 2024). Cross-border movement due to climate is less defined, as there is no official recognition or documentation, but individual evidences are there of people moving between Nepal and India, Bangladesh and India and in smaller numbers from the Maldives to Sri Lanka and other places (Almulhim et al., 2024). Climate impacts often act as a “threat multiplier,” exacerbating such drivers for migration (Marcus et al., 2023).

2.4. Impact of Climate Migration on Social, Economic and Politics in South Asia

No region has experienced more social and economic hardship from climate migration than South Asia. Displacement disrupts livelihoods opportunities, especially in agriculture, fishing and pastoralism thus the need to protect land ownership to prevent displacement from pushing people to take up low paid jobs in other areas. It also eats away the wealth of the household, and traps them into a poverty cycle. Some destinations may not enable migrants access to housing, health care and education; social networks may be adversely affected by migration (Ahmed, 2024).

The hundreds of thousands heading for cities continues to place cities under siege. This can lead to problems of overpopulation, increased demand for job and resources and a strain on facilities such as water supply, sanitation and public transport. And rampant informal settlements along the fringes of rivers and coastlines, where floods are a regular feature means that climate migrants would be even more vulnerable or find themselves displaced due to need to settle those already living in at-risk settlements (Hossain, 2022). When it comes to climate migration, such a double bind (IBID) may, in the political sphere, be established onto origin and destination areas. This can create decreased labor availability in rural locales, further leading to traditional agricultural methods becoming a lost art. Beyond that, a total of 13 migrant children has died in federal custody, sparking conflicts throughout the country sparked by resource competition, cultural assimilation and domestic security issues of a nativist type. Cross-border migration further complicates the scenario by evoking concerns over national sovereignty, border control policies and bilateral relations (Almulhim et al., 2024).

Indeed, political disputes over these sometimes-tenuous administrative arrangements are also often explosive think of historical migration across the Bangladesh-Indian border and citizenship, identity and national security arguments. A lot of the disputes are going to get worse in a more environmentally displaced climate change world (Hossain, 2022). The potential need for planned evacuation also echoes the rights and standing of Maldivians abroad (Gussmann & Hinkel, 2020). Also, does the migration of climate represent other aspects such as gender and social equity. As well as e.g., women, children and other marginalized groups stateless because they hold neither nationality of the country they fled from nor where they have sought sanctuary also often face higher risk of being trafficked for sex or labor purposes upon having to leave their homes, to discrimination in accessing services (e.g. healthcare and education). This is also not good for a social support structure as it means there are no community networks that would speak up or look out for the most vulnerable in these populations (Borràs-Pentinat, 2023).

Lack of special legislation for climate-induced displacement in South Asia adds to the confusion around governance for both migrants and policy-makers. Existing disaster management approaches are characterized by a focus on being more reactive rather than proactive settlement of refugees or adaptive strategies, for example. Environmental factors are an afterthought in migration processes, and refugee laws do not account for the displacement of people fleeing climate change as they are only provided for if displaced by war or persecution. As a result, there is a governance gap that is leaving millions without adequate safety nets and support (Hossain, 2022).

2.5. Climate Migration Governance

Climate migration governance is the regime of laws, policies and institutional mechanisms that have been devised to handle human movement driven by climate change (Mayer, 2014). The climate crisis sea-level rise, erratic weather conditions and resource depletion displacing millions of people worldwide is underscored by increasingly fragility of governance frameworks to these new shocks (Rahman et al., 2024). Climate-induced migration governance is intricate by its very nature as it automatically comprises of multiple legal regimes (refugee law, human rights law, environmental law) and virtually every level has different actors; international (east coast g. forest cover), regional (eastern European health

governments who have better health data collection in Europe), national, local and others who follow local actions from the bottom up (Okedele, 2024).

At the international level, meanwhile, climate migrants fit into none of the existing definitions; notably neither the 1951 Refugee Convention does not encompass them leading to a large protection gap. Although global policy instruments, like the Global Compact for Migration (2018) and the series of UNFCCC agreements, recognize that climate change can drive migration these are not legally binding and do not offer rights to displaced peoples (Pandey, 2025). It has created a patch-work quilt where the displaced often have no legal status and little or no access to protection or support.

There is an interesting distinction regionally in this space, as some areas have been leading the way in developing more personalized governance. The Kampala Convention (2012) in Africa, for instance, legally protects internal displacement by any factor-including environmental and proposed to be a promising blue print of governance bodies for climate flight. Pacific Island countries for example have started to incorporate climate mobility into their regional cooperation frameworks and associated migration with adaptation as a slow-onset climate risk response (Evjenth, 2024).

Unfortunately, there is no international regime governing climate migration and adaptation and the lack of harmonized legal frameworks to deal migrants due to climatic reasons plagues refugee law. Effective governance of climate migration requires multi-level coordination targeting integrated strategies that reflect an institutional setup capable of dealing with the trans-boundary nature of displacement, ensuring protection and promoting durable solutions for all stakeholders (Masud & Khan, 2024). This involves creating clear legal definitions, enforcement mechanisms, securing funding and promoting cooperation among states.

Governance in South Asia is just emerging and is fragmented. Examples of this constraint include that institutions such as SAARC are inadequate to respond to the challenges related to climate mobility; that national laws are generally centered on disaster response, rather than proactive migration management plans or international migration; and so forth (Ul Azam, 2025). Better governance in this region should be based on shared vulnerability by fostering the use of conceptually different regional protocols.

2.6. The Development of Regional Refugee Law in South Asia

For decades South Asia has been a laboratory for experimentation with large refugee flows to the region with emergencies taking the form of conflict, persecution, natural disasters and even political instability. Although the refugee problem is indeed serious and most countries in the region have no developed legislation or institutional arrangement to provide such protection. In South Asia, refugees are frequently viewed as illegal aliens and treated according to these laws which places asylum seekers and refugees at risk of arbitrary administrative decisions, limited rights and discrimination (Molden et al., 2022). In the region, bilateral discussions between the sending and receiving countries are the standard model. This demonstrates that political agreements are preferred by sovereign governments above official legal frameworks. The situation under discussion does bring out this acute necessity about southern Asia's refugee regime.

The protection of refugees may be organized under three possible frameworks: becoming a party to international instruments, adopting a regional instrument or enacting national legislation. The main international instruments are the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. No South Asian state has acceded to these instruments so far, with most withdrawing time and again due Cold War residue cling on the 1951 Convention against fears of resource burdens, reluctance to internationalize their domestic bureaucracies over perceptions in developed countries that political asylum is increasingly being misused doubt about the relevance of a refugee-acquis which was predominantly tailored for Europe to the context of predominantly conflict-driven refugee flows from within South Asia itself. B.S. Chimni is the source of the most widely used liberal argument. According to him (1998), areas that adhere to good governance principles and where government tends to 'converge' ought to think about joining. Otherwise, they run the risk of becoming remote 'islands' encircled by Western nations with stringent asylum laws. South Asian governments may gain some operational and legal clout as a result of accession. They will still have to deal with the difficulties brought on by the deteriorating international standards for refugee protection, though.

A third route might be through regional instruments. The Convention of the OAU in Africa (1969) and The Cartagena Declaration in Latin America (1984) offer frameworks for how to extend refugee status to victims of generalized violence, internal conflicts or human rights violations. The sharing of burden ensures uniformity in standards, encourages voluntary return and leads to coordinated responses through regional cooperation (Czunyi & Currie-Alder, 2021). Supporters of regional approaches maintain that since South Asian nations face common refugee issues, have shared policies and

social-political realities, regionalism is possible and effective in promoting cooperation and operation by UNHCR. Detractors, however, fear that regional actions might actually impede the national legislation process or could end up with a 'low common denominator' approach or miss internally displaced people (IDPs), which are better tackled through national action.

In light of these constraints, a national law is the best solution for South Asia. The UNHCR-led Eminent Persons Group (EPG) had been key in working through some of these issues by the 1990s. Reflecting these concerns, consultations held in Colombo (1995), New Delhi (1996) and Dhaka (1997) indeed illuminated the need for a South Asian legislative framework on refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. An exemplary national law would later be approved setting out provisions for the granting of refugee status, guarantees of fundamental treatment and mechanisms to operationalize the system (Siddiqui & Hossain, 2019). It considers criteria for recognition as a refugee, renews the principle of non-refoulement, states' rights and duties of refugees stating practices followed by the implementing agencies and some appellate measures, procedures in cases of mass influx continue funding post-voluntary repatriation. The model law represents a regional-specific framework yet consistent with universal refugee assistance principles.

The ratification of other international human rights instruments provides additional safety when it comes to refugee protection. Some of the South Asian countries have already ratified Conventions including Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Child Rights Convention and International Convention on the Elimination of All forms Racial Discrimination. These instruments revise non-refoulement to include a prohibition on refoulement of the most vulnerable asylum seekers are women, children and ethnic minorities. Also, states should ratify the Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons if they are looking to give legal protection number of non-national refugees (Serraglio & Thornton, 2024).

An option to advance regional refugee law: South Asia could consider a special regional legal instrument to address the particularities of the region, including environment and climate-induced displacement. This would include further institutional mechanisms, potentially through SAARC or a specialized agency, to coordinate responses, share information and protection under the law. This would require an enforcement mechanism and funding to encourage compliance along with the support of host countries. There is no comprehensive regional legal protection framework for refugees applicable to South Asia yet, but the looming challenges of climate change and displacement serve as indicators that it is about time some coordinated regional progress was made (Ramasubramanyam, 2021). The current asymmetric legal environment across South Asia places the protection of displaced populations at risk and can be ameliorated by looking to foreign examples, recalibrating political will amid pointed negative campaign issues.

3. Methodology

This study examines the complex legal landscape surrounding climate-induced displacement in South Asia and proposes a pathway for a regional climate refugee protocol. The qualitative doctrinal research methodology is fundamentally rooted in meticulously analyzing, interpreting and critiquing existing legal norms to identify gaps and recommend improvements. Unlike empirical research, doctrinal analysis does not involve collecting data from human subjects but delves deeply into black letter law such as treaties, statutes, case law and authoritative scholarship to determine the current legal principles. The exhaustive data collection strategy focuses solely on official legal texts and widely recognized secondary legal literature. Primary sources form the foundation, including international treaties like the 1951 Refugee Convention, the ICCPR, ICESCR, UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement as well as non-binding but influential instruments like the Global Compact for Migration and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Crucially, insights will be drawn from the binding regional African Union Kampala Convention which addresses disaster-induced displacement and offers a comparative precedent. Secondary legal and scholarly sources will complement the primary data, providing critical interpretations and theoretical frameworks. This includes an extensive review of academic journal articles from reputable publications in international law, human rights law, climate change law and migration studies, alongside books, edited volumes and reports from leading international organizations (e.g., UNHCR, IOM, World Bank) and respected think tanks. These multifaceted sources will help contextualize the legal provisions, identify existing academic debates and inform the nuanced analytical approach. All collected data will be systematically organized to facilitate rigorous analysis.

The multi-tiered data analysis procedures combine established and evolving legal analytical methods. An in-depth content analysis of legal texts will examine systematically the language, scope, interrelationships and limitations of legal provisions. Doctrinal analysis will apply established and emerging legal principles and theories such as the human rights-based approach, principles of climate justice, indigenous rights frameworks and environmental ethics to critically assess the efficacy of existing frameworks, identify their gaps and propose modifications. Throughout this iterative process, eth-

ical considerations will be paramount, ensuring proper citation and attribution to avoid plagiarism, maintaining transparency and objectivity in interpretation and conducting the analysis with profound respect for legal systems and the inherent dignity of vulnerable populations affected by climate change in dynamic ways. This rigorous methodological framework guarantees that the research's insights are legally sound, critically assessed from multiple perspectives and provide robust yet flexible, actionable recommendations for addressing climate-induced displacement equitably and sustainably.

4. Results

4.1. Regional Approaches to Migration and Displacement

Given the transboundary nature of climate impacts and shared vulnerabilities, regional cooperation mechanisms offer a potentially viable, yet challenging pathway for tackling climate-induced displacement. This section examines existing regional frameworks and proposals, focusing specifically on their relevance to South Asia.

4.1.1. Existing Regional Cooperation Mechanisms in South Asia

South Asia faces immense shared climate vulnerability amid complex geopolitical dynamics and historical tensions (Waseem & Chaudhry, 2024). Existing regional cooperation mechanisms have seen constrained success in comprehensively addressing human mobility issues, much less climate-induced displacement. While recognizing climate change as a threat, their frameworks remain too generalized, constrained by politics or narrowly focused to properly manage complex matters like cross-border displacement influenced by the environment (McAdam, 2012).

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), established in 1985 to promote economic and social progress alongside cultural development and collective self-reliance among member states, has initiatives for disaster management such as the *SAARC Disaster Management Centre* (Ariyawardana, 2022). Still, deeper integration and specific human mobility frameworks have been hindered by political mistrust and bilateral disputes, especially between India and Pakistan. No SAARC-wide agreement or protocol specifically addresses migration, less climate-induced displacement. Discussions on a regional climate migration protocol have gained little traction within SAARC despite the shared urgency (Ariyawardana, 2022).

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand with a focus on economic and technical cooperation, includes disaster management as a priority area (De, 2020). Yet its mandate and achievements in human mobility are even more restricted than SAARC's. No dedicated legal instruments or policy discussions within BIMSTEC concern climate-induced displacement. The concentration remains largely on trade, energy and connectivity. While formal regional protocols are absent, some bilateral agreements exist between Bangladesh and neighbors regarding border management or irregular migration. However, these typically prioritize security concerns and control over protection or humanitarian assistance for environmentally displaced people. The literature generally concludes the absence of a robust, rights-based regional migration governance framework leaves a significant void when existing regional bodies acknowledge climate change as a threat but current frameworks cannot properly manage complex issues like cross-border displacement influenced by the environment amid politically constrained progress (Siahaan, 2024).

4.2. Case Studies for Regional Protocols Elsewhere

While advancement has been gradual in South Asia, different domains have explored or actualized localized frameworks that propose important tutorials, both positive and instructive:

- **Kampala Convention (African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, 2009):** The Kampala Convention stood apart as the world's initial and sole judicially binding regional tool for the defense and aid of IDPs in Africa, crafted in 2009 (Adeola, 2019). While its major concentration is clashes-induced displacement, it does explicitly incorporate "natural or human-made disasters" among the causes of movement (AU, 2009, Art. 1(k)). The Kampala Convention's arrangements concerning state obligation, the rights of IDPs, avoidance of movement and resilient answers provide a robust precedent for extensive localized protection systems. Its inclusion of "natural disasters" makes it specifically pertinent for considering a South Asian protocol for environmentally-induced movement, demonstrating that localized instruments can adjust to diverse causes of movement (Adeola, 2019).

- **Pacific Island States (e.g., Nansen Initiative, regional dialogues):** The low-lying Pacific Island States, such as Nansen Initiative and regional conferences, are on the frontlines of climate change impacts, facing an existential threat from rising sea levels (Fornale & Kagan, 2017). While not adopting a legally binding regional “climate refugee” protocol, they have been outspoken proponents of international action and have engaged in significant regional discussions and frameworks under the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (Wilkinson et al., 2020). Countries including Fiji and New Zealand have explored bilateral agreements for “climate visas” or facilitated *migration routes* as adaptation strategies, examining solutions beyond the traditional refugee framework. Their advocacy underscores the moral and humanitarian imperative driving such deliberations (McAdam, 2014).
- **South American efforts (e.g., Cartagena Declaration, MERCOSUR):** South American efforts, for example the Cartagena Declaration and MERCOSUR residency agreements, while not directly centered on climate displacement, have adopted more expansive definitions of refugees or facilitated free movement in regional pacts, offering potential lessons for a more flexible approach to human mobility in times of crisis. The MERCOSUR agreements in particular facilitate residency among member states (Brumat & Acosta, 2020).

These regional precedents illustrate that while achieving a global “climate refugee” treaty may prove elusive, crafting a tailored regional protocol adapted to distinct geographical and geopolitical contexts offers a more practicable and potentially effective solution. The Kampala Convention specifically provides a robust legal template for comprehensive protection of internally displaced populations that could be broadened to cross-border movement induced by climate stresses.

Climate-induced displacement is an ecumenical crisis facing the region of South Asia, against which traditional juridical and political practices are not only incapable of mitigating, but also hold complicity. The study draws attention to this densely populated region, with varied geographical vulnerabilities ranging from rising sea levels to melting glaciers, being afflicted by both sudden and slow-onset displacement at unprecedented levels. According to the International Disaster Monitoring Centre (IDMC), annual net internal displacement is rising and in millions, especially in countries like Bangladesh.

One key finding of the study is climate migrants fall through the cracks, from a legal perspective. The 1951 Refugee Convention, a key source of international refugee law, does not allow for the protection of climate or environmentally displaced persons because it restricts the definition of ‘refugee’ to be based on persecution. These climate displaced persons are in a legal black hole of sorts, millions of people unable to secure basic rights or humanitarian assistance both within their own states and if they cross an international border.

According to the paper, that governance gap represents a major barrier to effective response. Most national and regional laws are geared towards crisis response (rather than migration governance) without a comprehensive human rights-based approach. In response to this, the authors recommend for an immediate creation of a new South Asian Climate Refugee Protocol which is legally binding. In other words, the authors propose developing a protocol that is incentivized by vulnerability and thus offers protection, as well as burden sharing within this framework, with Bangladesh being uniquely placed in initiating this vital climate tool.

5. Discussions: Towards a Regional Climate Refugee Protocol

5.1. Rationales for a Regional Outlook

A regional method to climate-induced displacement in South Asia is not merely advisable but essential, grounded in compelling justifications. Primarily, the geographic nearness and shared climate dangers among South Asian countries generate a natural imperative for collaboration. Nations like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan share transboundary rivers and coastlines that are highly prone to phenomena such as melting glaciers, intensified monsoons and sea-level rise (Waseem & Chaudhry, 2024). Climate impacts in one country inevitably have spill-over effects on its neighbors, particularly concerning human mobility (Fornale & Kagan, 2017). Secondly, existing regional cooperation mechanisms like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) provide established, albeit often challenging, platforms for dialogue and collective action. While these bodies have not yet effectively addressed climate migration, their infrastructures can be leveraged for this emerging challenge. Thirdly, the transboundary nature of climate impacts means that a purely domestic response is inherently deficient. For instance, the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta, shared by Bangladesh and India, experiences

severe river erosion and flooding that respects no political boundaries, driving internal and potentially cross-border displacement (Waseem & Chaudhry, 2024). Addressing such complex phenomena requires a coordinated regional strategy that acknowledges shared vulnerabilities and responsibilities.

5.2. Key Elements of a Potential Regional Protocol

A comprehensive regional climate refugee protocol would need to establish several critical components to guarantee its efficacy and fairness.

5.2.1. Definition of "Climate Refugee" within a Regional Context

The protocol must begin by outlining a clear and regionally-specific definition of "climate refugee" or "climate-displaced person." This definition should acknowledge the unique causes of displacement in South Asia, encompassing both sudden catastrophic disasters (e.g. cyclones, floods) and slow-onset events (e.g. rising sea levels, salinization, desertification). It should move beyond the 1951 Refugee Convention's "persecution" clause, focusing instead on environmental harms that render an area uninhabitable or undermine basic human rights and livelihoods, thereby compelling cross-border movement.

5.2.2. Principles of Non-Refoulement and Burden-Sharing

Central to any protection protocol are the principles of non-refoulement and equitable burden-sharing. The protocol must establish a legal obligation for signatory states to not return individuals to areas where their lives, dignity, or fundamental human rights are at severe risk due to climate impacts. Simultaneously, it must outline mechanisms for fair and balanced burden-sharing of climate-displaced populations among regional states. This could involve quotas, financial contributions, or other forms of assistance to countries hosting displaced individuals.

5.2.3. Rights and Protections for Displaced Persons

The protocol must explicitly guarantee rights and protections for displaced persons within the regional context. This includes ensuring access to basic services (shelter, food, water, sanitation, healthcare, education), facilitating access to dignified livelihoods and providing a clear legal status during their displacement. Provisions for family reunification and protection against exploitation and abuse are also paramount.

5.2.4. Mechanisms for Proactive Planning

Beyond reactive crisis management, the protocol innovates proactive planning. Regional early warning networks forecast climate hazards' impacts, while relocation frameworks coordinate rights-respecting cross-border mobility. Adaptation investments minimize displacement pressures through prepared communities. The aim is circumventing forced movement wherever possible and facilitating cross-border flows in an organized manner.

5.2.5. Institutional Oversight

South Asia is the most obvious entity with which to commission the protocol, building on SAARC's mandate for regional interdependence. Yet following the unpredictability and failure of SAARC to forge binding decisions, we might instead consider creating a South Asian Climate Mobility Agency through a novel convention. The agency would be responsible for coordinating displacement management, ensuring compliance and communicating with relevant bodies including UNHCR, IOM or Green Climate Fund.

5.2.6. Compliance and Enforcement

The protocol, in order to be credible, is required to have obligatory state reporting monitored through independent peer reviews merging a Regional Climate Tribunal or binding arbitration panel. Building on this legal and political infrastructure is the African Union's pioneering Kampala Convention which addresses both humanitarian and compliance mechanisms.

5.2.7. Funding Mechanisms

We suggest the establishment of a South Asian Climate Mobility Fund, sourced from each South Asian Intergovernmental (SIG) member state based on their proportion and topped up with international climate finance and donor support. The fund would be used to support host countries in their investments in infrastructure, reestablishment of livelihoods and successful integration of displaced populations.

5.2.8. Political Feasibility and Obstacles

Whether it works or not will hinge on careful avoidance of sovereignty sensitivities, disparities in state capacity, and deep-seated geopolitical rivalries especially between India and Pakistan. Provinces may worry migration policies are

slipping from their grasp. If you want to get past this, you really have to argue that the protocol is a humanitarian and climate resilience instrument rather than a migration control measure. We would suggest that such tools should have taken the form of soft law commitments and voluntary cooperation among members in the early phases to begin with.

5.2.9. *Bangladesh's Experience Catalyzes Action*

As amongst the most climate-vulnerable, Bangladesh's experience carries significant moral weight in advocating an innovative solution. Within regional alliances, its story highlights shared existential risks and the mutual benefits of cooperation. By openly sharing lessons from managing climate displacement domestically and challenges coordinating cross-border flows, tangible examples build consensus that a joint approach protects long-term interests for all. Its engaged leadership transforms border-focused debates to emphasize shared humanitarian responsibility and climate justice for all.

5.2.10. *Challenges to Regional Cooperation*

Despite the compelling rationale, significant challenges to effective collaboration among South Asian nations persist. Deep-rooted political sensitivities and centuries-old historical rivalries, most notably between India and Pakistan, often undermine regional coordination efforts. Sovereignty concerns also loom large, as each state may jealously guard control over internal migration flows and territorial boundaries. Stark economic imbalances within the region mean that less prosperous nations may feel overwhelmed shouldering a disproportionate share of the climate displacement burden alone. Finally, restrictions in resources, specialized expertise and institutional prowess could hinder the proper execution of an intricately planned regional protocol on cross-border climate migration. Overcoming these substantial obstacles demands steadfast diplomatic initiatives, trust-building steps and a shared understanding of the existential peril posed by an unchecked surge of climate-displaced individuals.

6. Recommendations

Climate-induced displacement, is possibly for the first time in its entirety, emerging as a critical challenge to South Asian region order, one which the region is neither mentally nor institutionally ready to handle completely. As this paper has argued, although in increasingly uncertain futures, millions have already been displaced both internally and transnationally due to the impacts of sudden-onset hazards as well as slow-onset environmental degradation. The telling result is an endemic and inescapable governance and legal deficit, rendering these people without formal identity, rights or protection. International legal instruments, notably the 1951 Refugee Convention, definitively exclude climate-displaced persons due to its narrow definition of 'persecution.' Despite some implicit protections offered by International Human Rights Law, it lacks specific provisions for cross-border movement based solely on climate grounds. In addition, while politically significant but non-binding instruments like the Global Compact for Migration aim to impose guidelines, they fail to establish enforceable obligations and leave their guidance subject only to voluntary state action. Even core climate change agreements prioritize adaptation over establishing legal recognition or protection for the displaced. The study concludes that a South Asian Climate Refugee Protocol. New age, right based and legally binding protocol, is not just an option but a crying necessity. Based on lessons from regional frameworks elsewhere, this protocol would support South Asian cooperation and establish a common framework for addressing the humanitarian tragedy. Considering its special vulnerability and a pro-active climate advocacy by this time, Bangladesh is well placed to be in the vanguard of this vital protocol. In the end, looking ahead, our paradigmatic orientation needs to transition from a reactive disaster response to a proactive collective legal framework which is designed to ensure that it respects and protects the dignity and right of climate-forced migrants.

The paper also suggests how these can be translated into practice,

- Institutionalizing diplomatic dialogue forums within South Asia for constructing a long-term narrative and mutual trust regarding climate mobility.
- Establishing a South Asian Climate Mobility Fund as an additional stream on top of international climate finance to be supported by member states allowing them hands-on support supporting the infrastructure, livelihood restoration and lasting integration of displaced populations host countries.
- Establish a legal drafting committee to draft a legally binding regional protocol on corporate human rights obligations;
- Creating collaborative mechanisms for information sharing that track trends in climate migration and guide policy responses.

7. Conclusion

The study has an ambitious undertone in the subject matter of displacement due to climate emergencies. It may have been readily noticed throughout the study, that regional empowerment and taking up of responsibility goes a long way in terms of assessment-based initiatives, regional capacity building and accessible humane protection. The theoretical implication of this study may be importantly noticed under the potential discussions attached to building a model protocol. The potential discussions which this paper facilitates are important to finalize the proposed protocol through scrutiny of matters like legal status of those displaced due to climatic reasons, equitable sourcing and allocation of funding, diplomatic strength building and paths of strategic alliances. The practical implication of this study is very promising. If we take into consideration of similar regional frameworks in the Pacific and Africa, we understand how important such discussions are in terms of making model laws or model conventions- which ultimately builds the foundation of practical execution of the core purpose; and that is to accept the reality of climate implications formally and build holistic capacity against the inhumane consequences of that. The limitations of this study however are the time constraint faced during the research process, as well as the lack of primary data from most vulnerable regions which could have painted a more emergent picture of the grim reality of real time displacement. Future research could focus on the social and economic integration of climate refugees, further investigation into the political dimensions of unrelated bilateral or multilateral climate migration agreements (if practicable) as well as question innovative legal statuses such as 'climate visas' from a South Asian migration policy perspective. Some problems demand a truly global response, and this is one of them; otherwise, we are headed from bad to worse with the regional crises unsettling human lives. The challenge for South Asia is to accept its moral duty to use its vast human, economic and societal resources to protect the dignity of people who relocate because of a climate that we are partly responsible for.

Declarations

Author Contributions

MSA conceptualized the study, developed the methodology, and was primarily responsible for drafting the manuscript. LDW provided oversight throughout the study, contributed to refining the manuscript through thorough proofreading and grammar correction, and managed the compilation of references. Both authors have critically reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding

No funding was received for this research.

Acknowledgments

The authors sincerely appreciate the technical support and access to facilities provided by BAIUST. The resources made available by the institution played a crucial role in facilitating the successful completion of this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- Abbass, K., Qasim, M. Z., Song, H., Murshed, M., Mahmood, H., & Younis, I. (2022). A review of the global climate change impacts, adaptation, and sustainable mitigation measures. *Environmental science and pollution research international*, 29(28), 42539–42559. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-19718-6>.
- Adeola, R. (2019). The impact of the African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 19(2), 591–607. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2019/v19n2a2researchgate.net+1scielo.org.za+1>.
- African Union. (2009). *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-0039_-_kampala_convention_african_union_convention_for_the_protection_and_assistance_of_internally_displaced_persons_in_africa_e.pdffen.wikipedia.org.

- African Union. (2009). *Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa*. <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa>.
- Afroz Smriti, A. (2024). Navigating environmental migration: *Legal frameworks in Bangladesh*. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)*, 5(1), 252–270. <https://doi.org/10.29032/ijhsss.v10.i1.2024.261-284>.
- Ahmed, M., Givens, J., & Arredondo, A. (2024). The links between climate change and migration: A review of South Asian experiences. *SN Social Sciences*, 4(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-024-00864-2>.
- Alimuddin, S. Z., & Muhammad, A. (2023). Soft law and the protection of climate migrants: A case study of Bangladesh. *Nation State: Journal of International Studies*, 6(1), 18–33. <https://doi.org/10.24076/nsjis.v6i1.996>.
- Almulhim, A. I., Alverio, G. N., & Sharifi, A., et al. (2024). Climate-induced migration in the Global South: An in-depth analysis. *npj Climate Action*, 3(47). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-024-00133-1>.
- Ariyawardana, N. S. (2022). Reforming the institutional and operational mechanism of SAARC organization: Potentials of SAARC in disaster risk management (DRM) in South Asia. *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 2(1), 97–104. <https://doi.org/10.4038/sljssh.v2i1.60>.
- Askland, H. H., Shannon, B., Chiong, R., Lockart, N., Maguire, A., Rich, J. K., & Groizard, J. (2022). Beyond migration: a critical review of climate change induced displacement. *Environmental Sociology*, 8(3), 267–278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23251042.2022.2042888>.
- Ayeb-Karlsson, S., Baldwin, A. W., & Zickgraf, C. (2022). Who is the climate-induced trapped figure? *Wires Climate Change*, 13(6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.803>.
- Balsari, S., Dresser, C., & Leaning, J. (2020). Climate change, migration, and civil strife. *Current Environmental Health Reports*, 7, 404–414. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-020-00291-4>.
- Bernzen, A., Jenkins, J. C., & Braun, B. (2019). Climate Change-Induced Migration in Coastal Bangladesh? A Critical Assessment of Migration Drivers in Rural Households under Economic and Environmental Stress. *Geosciences*, 9(1), 51. <https://doi.org/10.3390/geosciences9010051>.
- BIMSTEC: BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION: SWOT ANALYSIS FROM INDIAN PERSPECTIVES. (2024). *International Journal of Management, Public Policy and Research*, 3(4), 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.55829/ijmpr.v3i4.247>.
- Borges, I. M. (2018). Environmental change, forced displacement and international law: From legal protection gaps to protection solutions (1st ed.). *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203712023>.
- Borràs-Pentinat, S. (2023). Climate Migration: A Gendered Perspective. *Environmental Policy and Law*, 53(5-6), 385–399. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EPL-239008>.
- Brumat, L., & Acosta, D. (2020). Political and Legal Responses to Human Mobility in South America in the context of the COVID-19 crisis: More fuel for the fire? *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 2(592196). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2020.592196>.
- Burkett, M., & Lyster, R. (2018). Climate-induced displacement and climate disaster law: Barriers and opportunities. *Research Handbook on Climate Disaster Law*, 55–78. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3051486>.
- Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. (1984). *Cartagena Declaration on Refugees*. <https://www.acnur.org/cartagena-declaration>.
- Chimni, B. S. (1998). The Law and Politics of Regional Solution of the Refugee Problem: The Case of South Asia. *Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)*. Retrieved from http://www.rcss.org/policy_studies/ps-4.html.
- Clement, V., Rigaud, K. K., de Sherbinin, A., Jones, B., Adamo, S., Schewe, J., Sadiq, N., & Shabahat, E. (2021). *Groundswell part 2: Acting on internal climate migration*. World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/36248>.
- Czunyi, S. & Currie-Alder, B. (2021). Building Resilience in African Hotspots: Learning from Collaborative Research. In: Luetz, J.M., Ayala, D. (eds) *Handbook of Climate Change Management*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57281-5_328.
- De, P. (2020). Bay of Bengal integration: The new agenda. In S. Raihan & P. De (Eds.), *Trade and regional integration in South Asia* (pp. 15–34). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-3932-9_2.
- Drotbohm, H., & Winters, N. (2018). *Transnational lives en route: African trajectories of displacement and emplacement across Central America*. Retrieved from <https://repository.uantwerpen.be/docman/irua/7d19b9/149547.pdf>.
- Durieux, J. F. (2016). The duty to rescue refugees. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 28(4), 637–654. <https://academic.oup.com/ijrl/article-abstract/28/4/637/2548395>.
- Evjenth, N. (2024). *Climate change and its effects on Pacific Islander communities: Are climate changes and its effects a danger to Pacific Islander communities?* <https://doi.org/10.5070/M416263467>.
- Fahim, T. C., & Arefin, S. (2023). Climate Change-induced Salinity Intrusion and Livelihood Nexus: A Study in Southwest Satkhira District of Bangladesh. *International Journal of Rural Management*, 20(1), 106–123. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09730052231176915>.

- Fornale, E., & Kagan, S. (2017). Climate change and human mobility in the Pacific region: Plans, policies and lessons learned. KNOMAD Working Paper No. 31. World Bank. <https://documents.worldbank.org/pt/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099320408272439247>.
- Gemenne, F., Zickgraf, C., & Hut, E. (2022). Forced displacement related to the impacts of climate change and disasters. Oxford University Press. <https://hdl.handle.net/2268/290631>.
- Ghaly, S. (2021). Climate displacement and the need for legal protection. *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*. Retrieved from <https://studentjournals.anu.edu.au/index.php/aurj/article/view/543>.
- Gupta, D., Kumar, P., Okano, N., & Sharma, M. (2025). Climate-Induced Migration in India and Bangladesh: A Systematic Review of Drivers, Impacts, and Adaptation Mechanisms. *Climate*, 13(4), 81. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cli13040081>.
- Gussmann, G., & Hinkel, J. (2020). What drives relocation policies in the Maldives? *Climatic Change*, 163(2), 931–951. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-020-02919-8>.
- Hampton, J. (2013). *Internally displaced people: A global survey*. Taylor & Francis. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/>
- Hossain, A., Baten, R. B., Sultana, Z., & Rahman, T. (2021). Predisplacement abuse and postdisplacement factors associated with mental health symptoms after forced migration among Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(11), e2137587. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/article-abstract/2777507>.
- Hossain, B., Shi, G., Ajiang, C., Sarker, M. N. I., Sohel, M. S., Sun, Z., & Yang, Q. (2022). Climate change induced human displacement in Bangladesh: Implications on the livelihood of displaced riverine island dwellers and their adaptation strategies. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 964648. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.964648>.
- Hossain, T., Rabbani, A., Aktar, M., & Rifat, M. T. H. (2021, July). *Addressing climate change induced displacement and migration in Bangladesh: Taking a human rights-based approach*. ActionAid Bangladesh. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22149.15840>.
- Hossain, Babul et al. 2022. Climate Change Induced Human Displacement in Bangladesh: Implications for Displaced Riverine Island Dwellers' Livelihood and Adaptation Strategies. *Frontiers in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.964648>.
- International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). (2022). Annual report on displacement caused by climatic events. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/publications/annual-report-2022/>.
- IPCC. (2022). Climate change 2022: *Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Jolly, S., Ahmad, N., & Scott, M. (2024). Conclusion. In S. Jolly, N. Ahmad, & M. Scott (Eds.), Climate-related human mobility in Asia and the Pacific (pp. [insert page range]). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-3234-0_15.
- Kabir, E. (2018). *Unpacking drivers of vulnerability on internal migration in areas prone to drought and riverine erosion in North-West Bangladesh*. [Doctoral Thesis, Griffith School of Environment]. <https://research.repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/381686>.
- Kantamaneni, K., Panneer, S., Krishnan, A., Batta, A., Adinarayana, J., Kumar, N., & Sharma, R. (2022). Appraisal of climate change and cyclone trends in Indian coastal states: A systematic approach towards climate action. *Arabian Journal of Geosciences*, 15(19), 814. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12517-022-10076-8>.
- Lulić, M., Muhvić, D., & Čulo, I. R. (2023). *In support of the debate on the terminology related to the terms climate refugees, climate migrants, environmentally displaced persons, and similar terms*. *EU and Comparative Law Issues and Challenges Series*, 10(2), 182–199. <https://doi.org/10.25234/eclic/27441>.
- Majeed Salik, K., Shabbir, M., & Naeem, K. (2020, December). *Climate-induced displacement and migration in Pakistan: Insights from Muzaffargarh and Tharparkar districts*. Sustainable Development Policy Institute; University of Southampton. https://sdpi.org/climate-induced-displacement-and-migration-in-pakistan/publication_detail.
- Mallick, B., & Vogt, J. (2014). Population displacement after cyclone and its consequences: Empirical evidence from coastal Bangladesh. *Natural Hazards*, 72(2), 799–819. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-013-0803-y>.
- Marcus, H., Hanna, L., Tait, P., Stone, S., & Wannous, C. (2023). Climate change and the public health imperative for supporting migration as adaptation. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 7, 100174. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2023.100174>.
- Marlowe, J., & Offner, S. (2021). Reconceptualising climate-induced displacement in the context of terminological uncertainty. *Environmental Hazards*, 29(4), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17477891.2020.1867492>.
- Masud, M. A. K., Sahara, J., & Kabir, M. H. (2023). A Relationship between Climate Finance and Climate Risk: Evidence from the South Asian Region. *Climate*, 11(6), 119. <https://doi.org/10.3390/cli11060119>.
- Masud, S., & Khan, A. (2024). Policy implementation barriers in climate change adaptation: The case of Pakistan. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 34(1), 42–52. <https://doi.org/10.1002/eet.2054>.
- Mayer, B. (2014). Climate Migration Governance. In: Leal Filho, W. (eds) *Handbook of Climate Change Adaptation*. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-40455-9_112-1.
- McAdam, J. (2012). *Climate change, forced migration, and international law*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199587087.001.0001>.

- McGoldrick, D. (2022). *Rethinking EU policy towards refugees and asylum seekers in a time of emergency*. Brill. <https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=related:RJ1CgC2uKrsj:scholar.google.com/>.
- McNeill, I., Amin, A. A., Son, G., & Karmacharya, S. (2022). A lack of legal frameworks for internally displaced persons impacted by climate change and natural disasters: Analysis of regulatory challenges in Bangladesh. *Global Climate and Human Rights Journal*, 6(1), 1-19. <https://www.gchrij.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/4.-2022-APMA-6.1.pdf>.
- MERCOSUR. (2002). Residency Agreements of MERCOSUR. <https://www.mercosur.int>.
- Milán-García, J., Caparrós-Martínez, J. L., Rueda-López, N., & de Pablo Valenciano, J. (2021). Climate change-induced migration: A bibliometric review. *Global Health Action*, 14(1), 1927343. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12992-021-00722-3>.
- Molden, D.J. et al. (2022). The Great Glacier and Snow-Dependent Rivers of Asia and Climate Change: Heading for Troubled Waters. In: Biswas, A.K., Tortajada, C. (eds) *Water Security Under Climate Change*. Water Resources Development and Management. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5493-0_12.
- Nansen Initiative. (2015). *The Nansen Initiative: A call for action on the protection of persons displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change*. <https://www.nanseninitiative.org>.
- Okelede, P. O., Aziza, O. R., Oduro, P., & Ishola, A. O. (2024). Climate-induced migration: Global legal implications and human rights challenges. *International Journal of Science and Technology Research Archive*, 7(2), 84–96. <https://doi.org/10.53771/ijstra.2024.7.2.0071>.
- Oliver-Smith, A. (2019). Disasters and large-scale population dislocations: International and national responses. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Natural Hazard Science*. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/EGM2019_displacement.pdf.
- Pandey, S. (2025, July 5). Climate refugees and international law: Legal protection in the age of displacement. *SSRN*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5347649>. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=5347649>.
- Rahaman, M. A., Hossain, M. I., Kamal, A., Sharif, M. N., Mursheduzzaman, M., & Chowdhury, A. M. (2021). Climate-induced displacement and human migration landscape in Bangladesh. In W. Leal Filho, T. Wall, A. M. Azul, L. Brandli, & P. G. Özuyar (Eds.), *Handbook of climate change management* (pp. 1865–1882). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57281-5_25.
- Rahman, M. M., Chowdhury, M. M. I., Al Amran, M. I. U., Malik, K., Abubakar, I. R., Aina, Y. A., Hasan, M. A., Rahman, M. S., & Rahman, S. M. (2024). Impacts of climate change on food system security and sustainability in Bangladesh. *Journal of Water and Climate Change*, 15(5), 2162–2187. <https://doi.org/10.2166/wcc.2024.631>.
- Ramasubramanyam, J. (2021). Regional refugee regimes: South Asia. In C. Costello, M. Foster, & J. McAdam (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of international refugee law*. Oxford Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1093/law/9780198848639.003.0023>.
- Rasheed, S. (2025, January 7). *The Maldives: The future of climate change*. Foreign Policy in Focus. <https://fpif.org/the-maldives-the-future-of-climate-change/>.
- Scott, M., & Salamanca, A. (Eds.). (2020). *Climate change, disasters, and internal displacement in Asia and the Pacific: A human rights-based approach* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003015062>.
- Seddiky, M. A., Ara, E., & Karim, A. (2024). Climate change-induced hazard risks and migration in Bangladesh: A case study. *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, 7, 100253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crsust.2024.100253>.
- Serraglio, D. A., & Thornton, F. (2024). Women on the move? Mainstreaming gender in policies and legal frameworks addressing climate-induced migration. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 12, 53. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-024-00412-0>.
- Siahaan, G. (2024). Climate Induced Migration: Conflict Resolution and Legal Efforts in Pacific, Africa and South Asia. *Global International Journal of Innovative Research*, 2(7), 1558-1567. <https://doi.org/10.59613/global.v2i7.246>.
- Siddiqui, M. R., & Hossain, M. A. (2019). Climate change and migration in coastal areas in South Asia. In W. Leal Filho, A. Azul, L. Brandli, P. Özuyar, & T. Wall (Eds.), *Climate action. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 1–14). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71063-1_101-1.
- Stojanov, R., Duží, B., Kelman, I., Němec, D., & Procházka, D. (2017). Local perceptions of climate change impacts and migration patterns in Malé, Maldives. *The Geographical Journal*, 183(4), 370–385. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45175714>.
- Ul Azam, R. M. (2025, June 30). Bridging legal gaps in South Asia: The challenge of integrating climate-induced displacement into refugee protection frameworks for environmental migrants. *The Journal of Climate Law and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5340242>.
- United Nations Expert. (2024, April 25). UN Expert: Maldives stuck between rock and hard place on climate change issue [Press release]. United Nations in Maldives. <https://maldives.un.org/en/267078-un-expert-maldives-stuck-between-rock-and-hard-place-climate-change-issue>.

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (1992). *UNFCCC (United Nations)*. <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>.
- United Nations. (1951). *Convention relating to the status of refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10>.
- United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>.
- United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>.
- United Nations. (2015). *The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC)*. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf.
- United Nations. (2018). *Global compact for migration*. https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195.
- Waseem, W., & Chaudhry, S. (2024). Assessing the geopolitical shifts in South Asia due to climate change: Analyzing the Brahmaputra River Basin (2010–2020). *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 279–290. [https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024\(5-II-S\)28](https://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2024(5-II-S)28).
- Wilkinson, E., Kirbyshire, A., Mayhew, L., Batra, P., & Milan, A. (2020). *Climate-induced migration and displacement: Closing the policy gap*. International Organization for Migration. <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1411/files/documents/2023-11/10996.pdf>.
- Woodworth, P. L. (2005). Have there been large recent sea level changes in the Maldives Islands? *Global and Planetary Change*, 49(1–2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloplacha.2005.04.001>.
- Zetter, R. (2017). Why They Are Not Refugees: Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Population Displacement. *Migration-Muuttoliike*, 43(1), 23–28. Noudettu osoitteesta <https://siirtolaisuus-migration.journal.fi/article/view/89696>.