

The Climate Security Festival is an event that brings together civil society, public sector, businesses, artists, researchers, and active citizens to discuss the risks associated with climate change and seek climate-safe living. The festival program was built around workshops aimed at strengthening and promoting collaboration among various actors in an open and equal space.

Workshops were confidential, and each participant represented themselves rather than their organization or title. This workshop report summarizes the two-day workshop sessions and is the result of participants' collective thinking.

Name of the workshop: **War and its effects on climate and the environment**

Date and time: **Thursday 21.9.2023, 10.00–12.30am & 13.30–15.00am**
Friday 22.9.2023, 10.30–12.30am

No. of participants: appr. 30

Notes taken by: Laura Puumala & Helmi Räisänen

1. What were the key questions that sparked the workshop's work?

- What is security, conflict and war? How to understand defense?
- Why we want to securitize climate change? What are the aims, visions, and values related to this process
- To what extent we want to securitize? Whose security matters? Who are “we” who are securitizing? Militarization in the climate security context vs. transparency in the military machinery
- How/through what processes we want to securitize climate change? Just transitions, fairness and responsibility in the process and in its outcomes.

2. What answers did you find to them, i.e. where did you end up?

a) The premises and paradigms of security are grounded on the assumption that national security is threatened by an outside enemy about to violently attack.

→What if we change this first premise: climate change is the common enemy

→Then the whole paradigm changes because maybe the armed forces and the military machinery is not the best (or the only or the main) sector to manage this threat.

- Environment as a “silent victim” of slow violence; what’s the idea behind this rhetoric and violent rhetoric in general? We need to positively defend the environment to defend ourselves – the environment is our best ally.
- Yet, there’s a vicious cycle between climate change and conflict.

→ A need to re-define the concept of security, violence, and victimhood.

b) Ecological and environmental aspects are our best allies in adapting and mitigating the threat of climate change and its cascading impacts.

- Human development, well-being and environment are closely interlinked ~ The idea of “planetary health”.
- We have an illusion of great events (like specific wars, e.g., in Ukraine) that will change everything, while in reality the change (to better or worse) is happening right now and all the time.
- A structural conflict exists between military security and environmental security.
 - The existence and action of the military complex is an environmental threat, yet the military complex sees itself as the defender of peace and stability, the preconditions for sustainable development and environmental and natural protection.

There are already “environmental wars” also in the sense that the environment and the climate are at a point, where in particular indigenous people and land and environmental defenders need to put their lives at risk every day just to get by, even though there is no dramatic conventional war going on.

c) We want to dismantle the juxtaposing between civil and military society, and between national, human, and environmental security.

We want to question and criticize the military complex and its function in a way that does not create more or escalate existing tensions but transgresses them towards a mutual win-win or at least a just and fair compromise.

- We want to mitigate the environmental impact of wars and armed forces.
 - Taking existing agreements seriously, like The Paris Agreement and NATO’s agenda
 - Is it the morally right thing to do to “green wash” the military in order to make more sustainable war or is it better to take climate and environmental worries seriously and then see, what kind of action becomes justified and unjustified
- Securitizing with solidarity, justice, harmony, and fairness.

d) Transparency as perhaps the most important quality of the process

→ Dismantling gatekeeping: maybe (climate) security should not be left only to security professionals

- Fair distribution of responsibility: Soldiers do the “dirty work” of conflicts and are in that sense responsible. Then again soldiers only do what they are told to do; policymakers and politicians are (also/mostly) responsible. On the other hand, the policy makers may go behind the military leadership and personnel may hide behind their orders.

→ Who should take responsibility in a complex process and in a collective problem with collective decisions and solutions?

- Climate security through positive, active peacebuilding rather than negative peace only as the absence of war.

3. What kind of learning experiences were created during the work?

The process might have been a bit stressful with so many different viewpoints, frameworks, backgrounds, and personalities coming together. It is also a huge learning experience to learn to endure uncertainty and unclarity – or even to start seeing it as a resource and a richness.

- Having a discussion without any titles and backgrounds also seemed to be a challenging but a valuable exercise.
- However, some might have been more safe and secure in expressing their opinions and thoughts – Equality and safer space for all possibly remains a challenge for the next festivals to come.
- Still, as one participant put it: even if we have different viewpoints and opinions, we are all on the same side here and on the right side at that!

4. Could you find any suggestions or activities that could be taken forward?

- Foresight as a different perspective and a way to search for solutions in addition to mitigation and adaptation relating to climate security.
- Transparency especially in the hard security sector.
- More intergenerational and diverse participation in discussion with fair distribution of responsibility; reaching out but also giving a voice and listening. Because it is everyone's right but also because that is a better process.
- Military emissions and spending under scrutiny and increasing transparency.
- Agreeing and acknowledging on a common goal, value and vision then seeing what concrete solutions are possible, effective, and justified in relation to these values and visions.
- Suggestions for concrete solutions already exist. How to act on them?
- Asking for transparency and mandatory reporting on military emissions
- Asking for a nuclear ban
- Demilitarizing the Arctic
- Creating a climate refugee status
- Looking for a shared compromise: in knowledge, in means, in aims, in visions.

- Easing the tension that comes from wanting to follow the rules but also initiate change by striving to change the rules.
- We can strive to change laws, rules, regulations, and/or agreements; there is a wide array of means for having an impact.
- Asking and insisting for a change with petitions and letters to politicians and/or to the president. And if not asking for a change, then at least for an explanation, holding people responsible for their action or inaction and asking and taking our power back.

"We have all the moral power!"