

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

**Climate Change, Environmental Degradation
& Conflict/Violence**

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Climate is changing everywhere, but it is people living in fragile contexts who will be most severely impacted.



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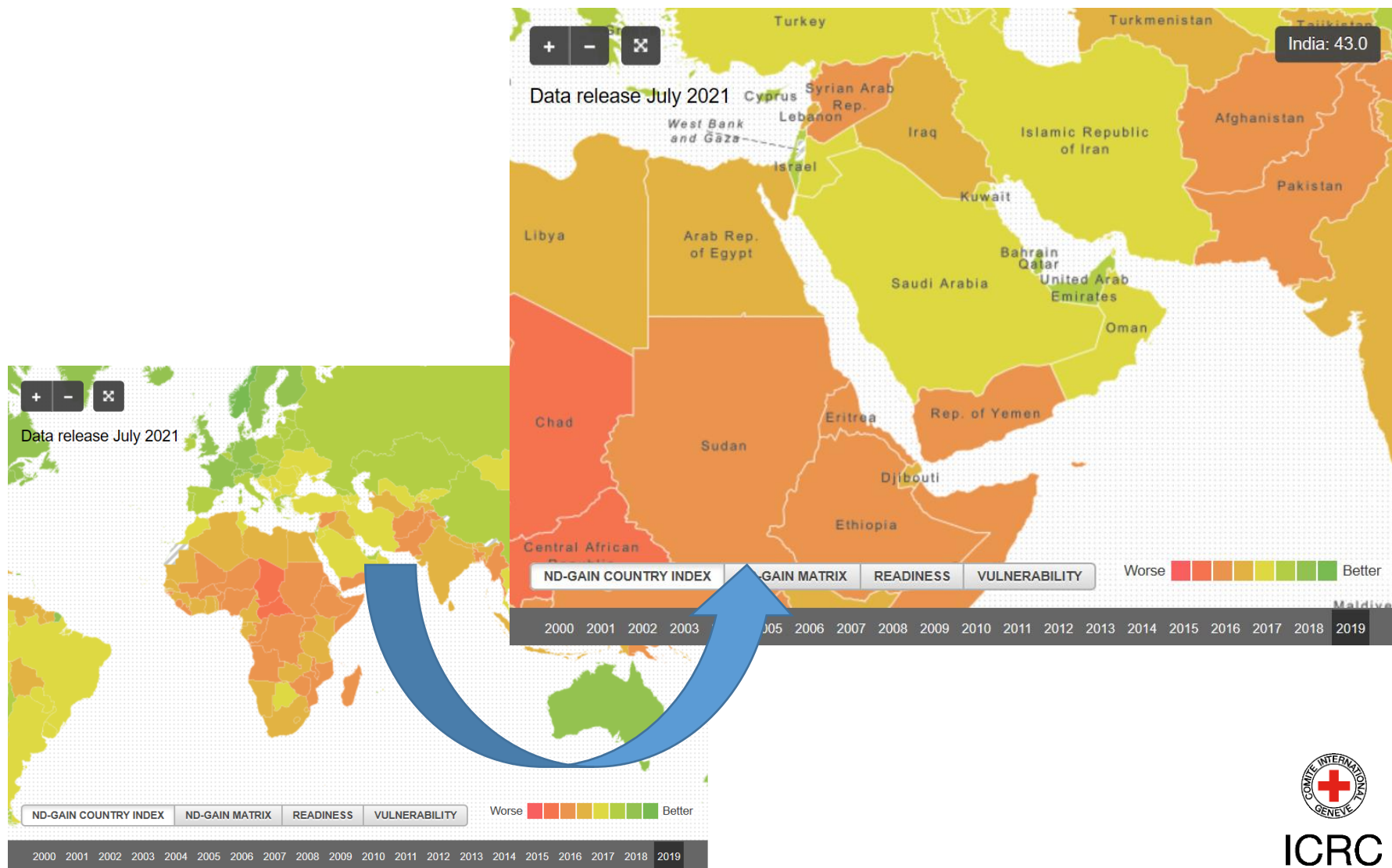
- According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-Gain) Index, out of the 25 countries deemed most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change by the ND-Gain Index, 14 are mired in conflict

Why?

- This is not because climate change causes conflict, but because countries in conflict have a very limited capacity to adapt to a changing climate
- Conflicts disrupt the foundations of societies; they limit people's capacity to cope with shock and changes, including those resulting from a changing climate



Iraq and Yemen among the most vulnerable countries in the Middle East



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Environmental changes

People interviewed in CAR, Iraq and Mali conveyed a **deep sense of loss and disorientation** as they can no longer recognize their environment or read the weather and are **ill-prepared for repeated climate hazards**

In Mali and Iraq, people made it clear that environmental and climate factors are making their lives harder by threatening their access to water and food and their economic security



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Environmental changes

Conflicts could
cause lasting
environmental
consequences

In southern Iraq,
people attribute
their water and
farming
problems to
episodes of the
Iran-Iraq war
when date palms
were cut down



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The effect of water scarcity in Yemen

It severely affected the agricultural productivity, which alongside the conflict, led to increase the number Yemenis suffering from serious vector-borne diseases, including malaria.



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What does the IHL say?

- Promoting respect for IHL can reduce the risks faced by communities enduring conflict.
- IHL prohibits attacks on agricultural land or drinking water as objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population
- Greater respect for these rules can limit environmental degradation, and therefore reduce the risks that communities are exposed to as a result of climate change.



IHL provides protection to the natural environment:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTJCh41Qowo>



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What is the ICRC doing to adapt its humanitarian response?

- Reinforcing the capacity of affected communities to become more resilient to shocks resulting from a changing climate and environment
- In terms of health systems, we are looking at how to integrate more systemic support early in our emergency responses
- Our Economic Security and Water and Habitat units are increasingly integrating the impact of hazards, including climate shocks and risks, into their analysis



Strengthening people's resilience in the Sahel

In Mali and other Sahelian countries, we help farmers and herders cope with increasing rainfall variability and water scarcity through supporting the rehabilitation of irrigation schemes, and the production and storage of animal feed or seeds in community managed silos.



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In Iraq, ICRC rehabilitates water pumping and treatment stations, piped networks and irrigation systems, in order to reduce water losses.



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The Climate and Environment Charter

- In May 2021, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement launched the *Climate and Environment Charter* to support and promote greater climate action within the humanitarian sector.
- It aims to help humanitarian organizations play their part and highlight their relevance in responding to the climate and environmental crises.
- It represents commitment from the humanitarian sector to adapt its ways of working and work collectively to address these crises



By 2050, 200 million people could need international humanitarian aid every year – a doubling compared to 2018, partly due to climate change ([“The cost of doing nothing”](#), IFRC 2019)



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THANK YOU
QUESTIONS?



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