

Who is a climate refugee?

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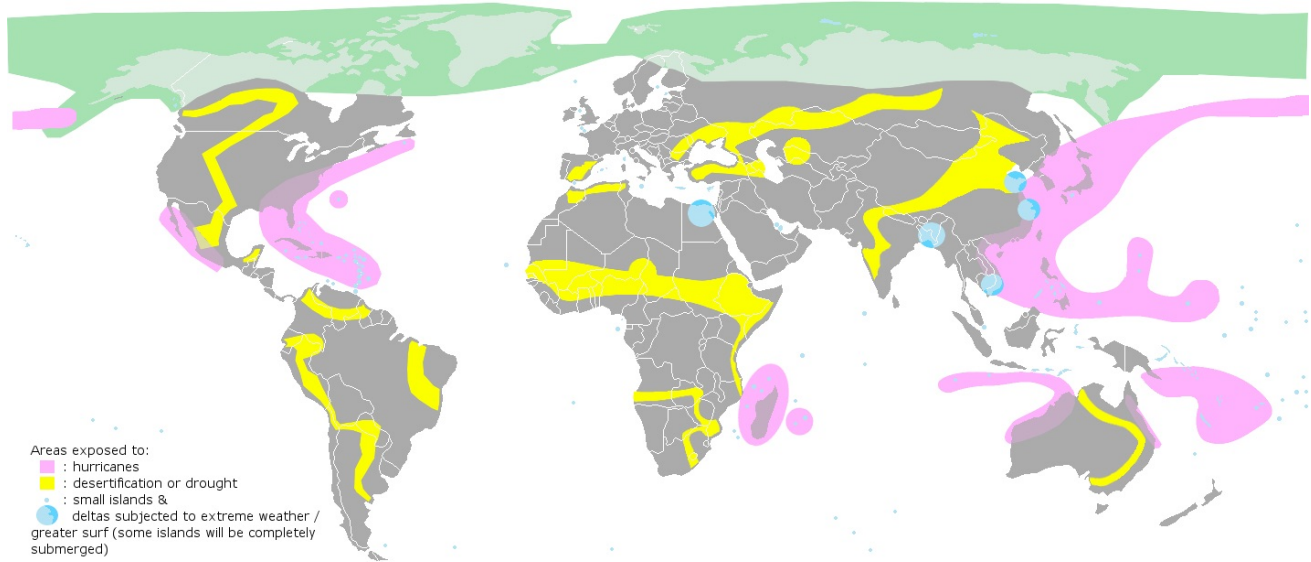


In this photo from 2015, a woman walks on a dam built by the government in the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh. This country is particularly affected by disasters due to global warming. Scientists say this will lead to millions of refugees. Photo by: Shahria Sharmin/AP

Climate change is a long-term change in the Earth's weather. It can be caused by natural events, like volcano eruptions. Humans can also cause climate change.

Climate refugees are the victims of climate change. They must leave their homes to survive.

Most recently, the earth has become warmer. Scientists call this global warming. It is one kind of climate change. Humans are responsible. They have cut down forests and burned fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are fuels from nature, like coal, oil and gas. When they burn, they make greenhouse gases. These gases trap heat in the air.



Temperatures are rising. They melt glaciers and polar ice caps. This causes flooding and makes sea levels rise. This also leads to droughts and floods. Farmland becomes desert.

Environmental refugees are people who flee because of a natural disaster. Some of these disasters are caused by climate change. The United Nations is the world group of nations. It says there were 36 million environmental refugees in 2009. Scientists predict at least 50 million by 2050.

Rising Sea Levels

Bhola Island is in Bangladesh. In 1995, the sea level rose. It covered half the island with water. About 500,000 people became homeless. Scientists predict flooding will get worse. There could be as many as 20 million climate refugees.

Louisiana loses about 25 square miles to the sea every year. Fishermen have to go further out to catch fish. Rising sea levels make storm damage worse.

Maldives

The Maldives is an island nation in the Indian Ocean. It is in great danger from rising sea levels.

There are 1,200 islands in the Maldives. The rising sea level may sink all of them. Leaders of the Maldives are working on a plan to save its people.

Venice

Venice is in Italy. It is also threatened by sea level rise. Venice is an ancient city built on islands. In 1900, the city's main square flooded seven times. In 1996, it was underwater 99 times.

The city is sinking. Venetians may have to leave.

Drought

The Gobi Desert is in China. Each year, about 1,400 grasslands become desert. Farmers cannot grow crops. They have to move to the city.

Drought is a big problem in Somalia and Ethiopia. These countries are in east Africa. Sometimes there is not enough rain. People could not grow enough crops to feed their families. Thousands left their homes and now live in refugee camps.