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## Climate Change, Humanitarian Risks, and Social-Political (In)stability Along the Gulf of Aden: Expert Elicitation for the Case of Somalia and Yemen

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**Abstract:** Changes in the global oceanic system have already negatively affected the world's marine life and the livelihoods of many coastal communities across the world, including in the Middle East' and Eastern Africa's Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Coastal communities in Somalia and Yemen for instance, have been particularly affected by extreme environmental events (EEEs), with an increase in the frequency of tropical cyclones over the past 20 years. Using expert elicitation as a method to generate data to assess and quantify a specific issue in the absence of sufficient and/or reliable data, the authors interviewed selected specialists in or from Somalia and Yemen, from diverse fields of expertise related to climate change, extreme environmental events, disaster risk reduction, and humanitarian affairs. Ten experts followed the elicitation protocol and answered a specific series of questions in order to better quantify the expectable mid-to-long-term climatic and humanitarian levels of risks, impacts, and consequences that climate change and related issues (e.g., sea-level rise, tropical cyclones, and sea surge) may generate in coastal areas along the Gulf of Aden's coastal cities of Aden and Bossaso, in Yemen and Somalia, respectively.

The findings indicate that there is cause for significant concern as climate change is assessed by all interviewees - irrespective of their background -, as very likely to hold a negative to a devastating impact on (fresh) water security, food security, public health, social conflicts, population displacement, and eventually political stability; and to strongly worsen the humanitarian situations in Somalia and Yemen, both in the medium-term (i.e., 2020-2050) and the long-term (i.e., 2020-2100). The authors call on the scientific community to further research the issue of climate change in the understudied coastal areas of the Gulf of Aden, and on the international community to pro-actively and urgently help the local populations and relevant authorities to rapidly and strongly build up their adaptation capacities, especially in the niche of coastal EEEs.