



Joint workshop with the Iraqi Defence University for Higher Military Studies and the Royal Danish Defence College

Policy brief from the workshop on February 8 2023

Introduction

On February 8 2023, the Strategic Studies & Research Center (SSRC) at the Iraqi Defence University for Higher Military Studies (DUHMS) in concert with the Centre for Stabilisation (CFS) at the Royal Danish Defence College's (RDDC) Institute for Strategy & War Studies (ISW) held a joint online workshop titled "*Climate change, security and green defense – A Danish and Iraqi perspective*".

Purpose and key elements

The main objective of the workshop was to serve as a platform for academic discussions between the SSRC and RDDC concerning the consequences of climate change from a security and defense perspective. The convergence of climate change and security policy was addressed from a Danish and an Iraqi point of view. The workshop was one of several online workshops and webinars, which have been organized by the SSRC and CFS financed by the Danish Peace- and Stabilization Fund's Program for Iraq & Syria and supported by NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) and NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP). The RDDC's program for Iraq & Syria, focuses on academic capacity building efforts between researchers at SSRC

and the RDDC. The workshop presented an opportunity to address the regional and international consequences of climate change. The workshop was attended by Director of the SSRC, Major General Ahmed Ali Hussein Al-Tamimi.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The Middle East and Asia are disproportionately negatively affected by climate change compared to their level of CO₂-emissions
2. In Iraq, water distribution and agriculture are particularly impacted by climate change, which has severe consequences for the national economy
3. In order to comply with the Paris Agreement, there is a need to involve the industry in Denmark to mitigate the challenges of climate change.
4. Innovative solutions towards replacing the use of fossil fuels with more sustainable energy sources must be identified within defence industries



Photo taken at the Defence University of Higher Military Studies during the workshop. From left to right: Director of the SSRC, Major General Ahmed Ali Hussein Al-Tamimi; Military Researcher at the SSRC, Bg. Dr. Hazim Dawood Mohsen; Senior Advisor, NMI, Col. Besim Bala.

Key takeaways from the workshop

The workshop began with a presentation by Bg. Dr. Hazim Dawood Mohsen, Military Researcher at the SSRC, regarding Iraq's current climate situation. He stressed that climate change is having a negative impact on Iraq's current environmental, economic and security challenges. Rising temperatures, intense drought, desertification and erratic dust storms, have according to Dr. Mohsen, put many sectors in Iraq but especially agriculture under pressure.

Dr. Mohsen emphasized that the Middle East and Asia have been disproportionately negatively affected by climate change compared to how much CO2 they emit. Regarding Iraq, he underlined two aspects that are particularly affected by the climate crisis: water distribution and agriculture.

The two components inextricably play essential roles in Iraq's economy. Water scarcity in particular is a major concern, since it can lead to problems with water management and desertification whereby fertile soil becomes arid. The worsening drought and water crisis are fatal for regions in Iraq that rely on agriculture as a source of income, food and livelihood.

Subsequently, Military Analyst at the Center for Military Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Cdr. Jens Wenzel Kristoffersen, presented his lecture on Climate and Security seen from a Danish perspective focusing on Danish initiatives, priorities and goals towards a *Green Defense*. Cdr. Kristoffersen highlighted the importance of involving the industry in mitigating the challenges of climate change. Having agreed to the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Danish defence industry



needs to contribute to the 70 percent reduction target by 2030. To comply with this, the Danish Ministry of Defence has outlined a Green Action Plan for the period 2021 to 2025 with seven focus areas and 47 action points. Cdr. Kristoffersen stated that there is an urgent need for innovative solutions in order to realign the Danish Defence to lower its carbon footprint. One of the main points for combating climate change was the move from fossil fuels to environmentally sustainable

energy sources such as sunlight, wind and water.

The workshop concluded with a joint discussion guided by questions by the audience. The discussion session formed the basis of relevant and interesting exchange of insights. The next joint workshop between the SSRC and CFS will take place on May 3 2023. The workshop will focus broadly on strategy in a defence and security perspective.