

# Grassroots Insights into Risk and Resilience

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Rethinking the Role of Community in Climate-induced Relocations for Afghan Refugees in Iran

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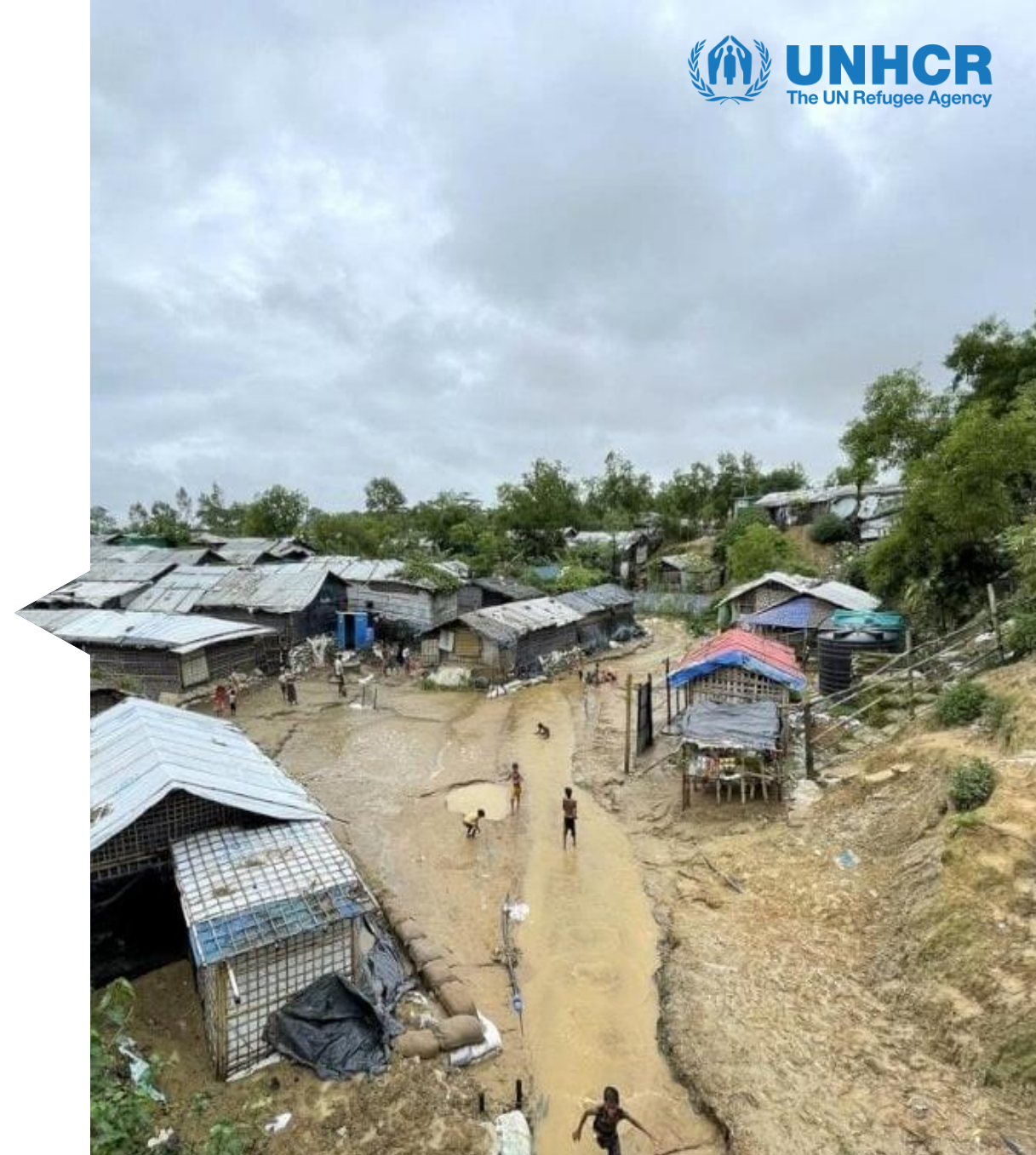
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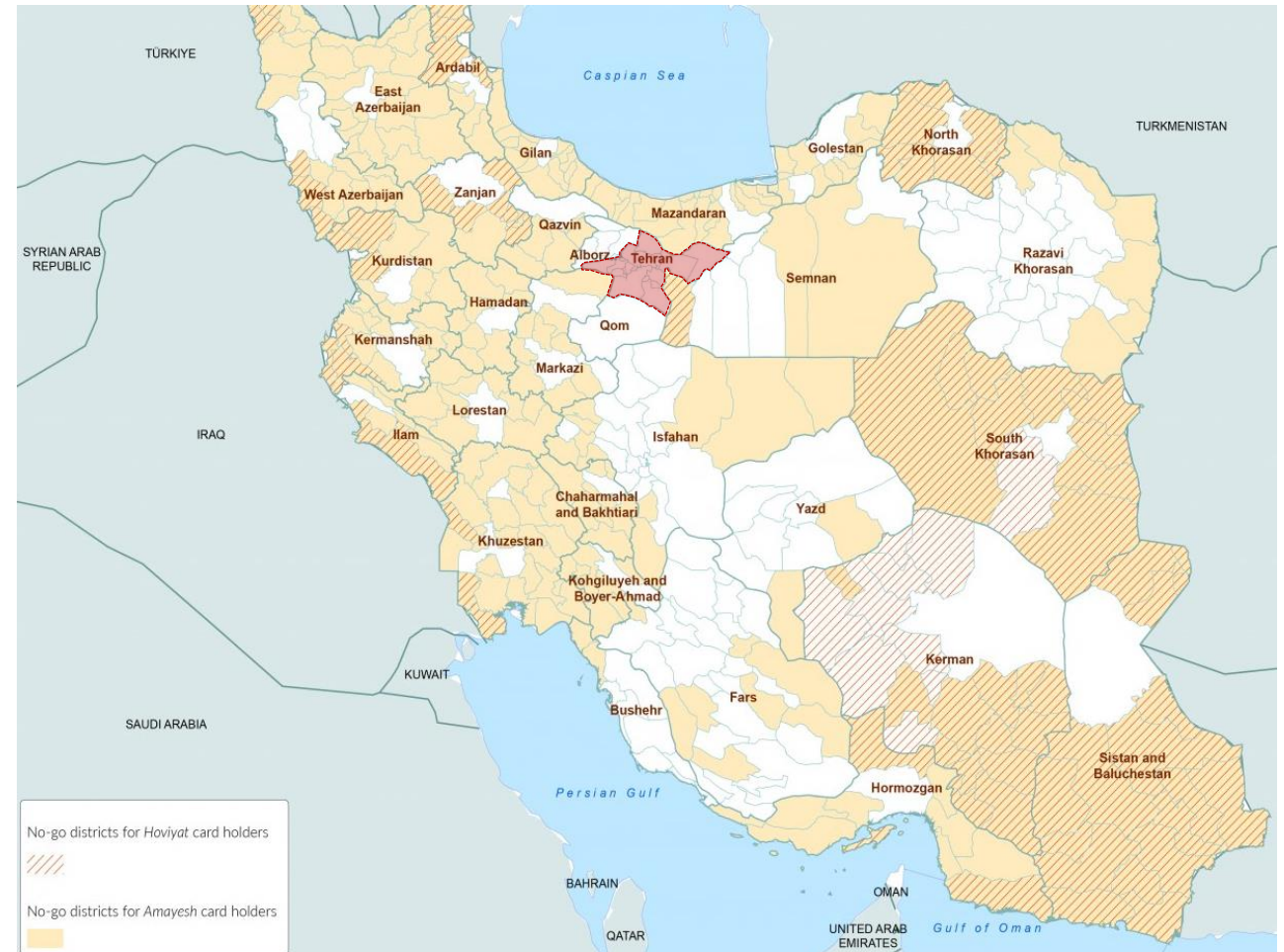
## Afghan Displacement: The Longest Refugee Situation

- 42 years on since the 1979 Soviet invasion
- The U.S. war as of 2001
- Taliban takeover in 2021
- The longest protracted refugee situation in history



# Climate Risks in Refugee-located Areas of Iran

- Iran is the second largest refugee hosting country. About 3.8 million Afghans who have been forced to flee their home are currently settled in Iran (UNHCR, 2023).
- Refugees are entitled to live or travel within limited urban areas which are located in highly at-risk regions.
- As a result of drastic drought and flood events in those provinces, during the last few years, many refugee groups have to migrate from one province to another to diminish damage, losses and impacts caused by climate-induced disasters.

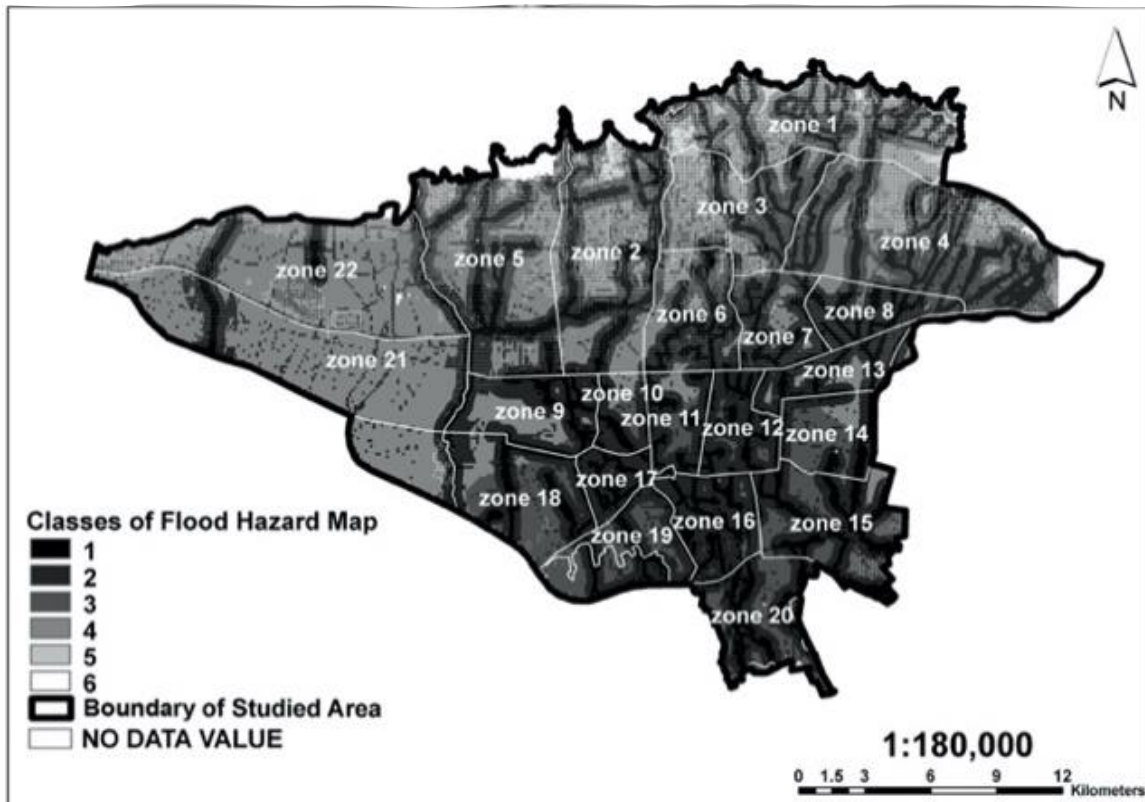




## Lessons from Climate-induced Planned Relocations

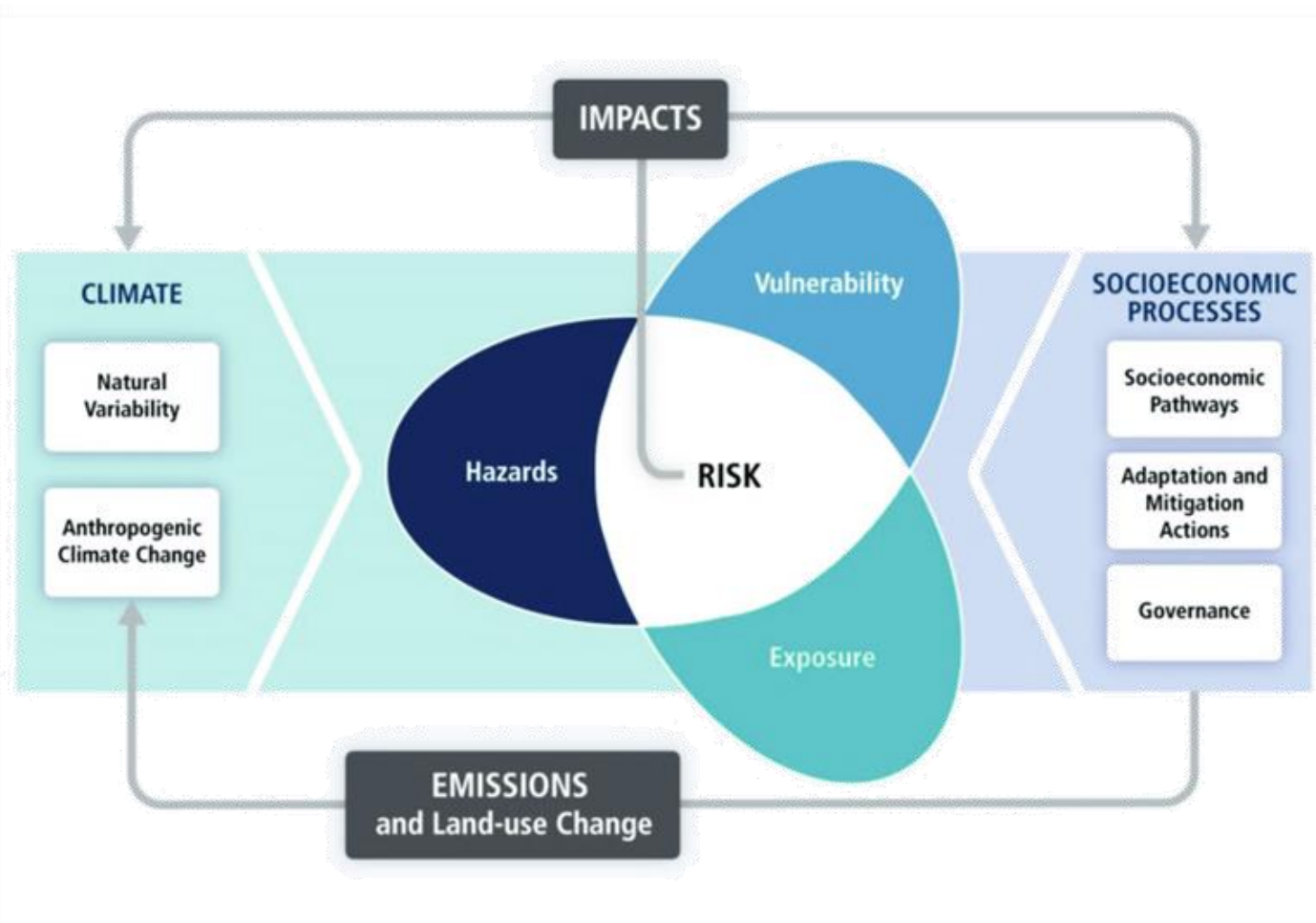
- Planned relocations implemented jointly by the government and international development/aid agencies
- The implementation of the planned relocation projects is rarely successful
- A top-down manner overlooking people's view of risks and their daily needs, the CSO's inputs and insights
- The relocation interventions fail to prevent or minimize the environmental risks in the new settlements

# Extreme Flood and Drought events: Climate Impacts in Tehran



- An analysis of flood hazard exposure also highlights the southern parts of the city and the river valleys peripheral areas as the most exposed areas against floods.
- Most of the refugee settlements in the periphery of the city are located in those areas and are not linked to the drinking water supply and wastewater network.
- Since most of these settlements are located at the end of the water network, they will most probably be excluded from the water rationing in case of water scarcity and droughts. The refugees living in those regions can be more susceptible to risks posed by climate impacts - and have fewer resources to handle them.





## The Key Drivers of Climate Risk

IPCC's schematic of the interaction among the physical climate system, exposure, and vulnerability producing risk. (Oppenheimer et al., 2014), a contribution to IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). **By employing this conceptual framework, the research aims to analyze the climate system and socioeconomic process as the central drivers of the different core components that constitute the climate risks.**



# Socioeconomic Pathways: The Gaps in the Institutional and Governance System

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- The challenges are predominantly addressed by governmental organizations, whereas in the old times it was the community who played a more effective part in solving the problems. In their absence, those responsibilities seem to be distributed among the governmental bodies (Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Tehran City Council, and their subordinates).
- This change has brought about a big drawback: the omission of a facilitator of communication and a mediator between community members and formal institutions, which has become a vast gap between the community and the authorities. Without such an actor, neither governors nor authorities would notice the real-life challenges and shocks. In addition, the people who affect or are affected can not properly express their demands.
- The forms of community participation deployed by development agencies are rigidly designed to deliver a limited number of predefined outcomes responding to external priorities.
- Processes are mediated by local individuals who represent existing unequal power relations within the refugee community. These inequalities are reinforced by development interventions that tend to favor elite capture of project benefit.

# Paradoxes and Potentials of Community-based Intervention

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- By focusing on the development of collective identity, community development approaches often nurture a divide between “us” and “them” that can exacerbate conflicts with those not included in the particular identity-based definition (e.g. undocumented refugee populations).
- Those should not stop community-based work, but reinvigorate it. The role of CSOs and community groups to inform the policy/decision-making and needs assessment for planned relocations in the face of climate risks is crucial.
- Studying the grassroots insights into the urban risks and resilience, developing the collective capacity of marginalized refugee groups and civil society organizations, and generating genuine partnership between communities, CSOs and the local government are suggested.
- The planned relocation due to slow-onset impacts of climate change and as a disaster risk reduction strategy provides opportunities to save lives and assets, if articulated into a comprehensive/multi-stakeholder plan taking into account how relocation is understood and embraced - by the relocated community, by the receiving community, and the community left behind.



**Thank You!**

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