

Which Countries Drive the Climate Security Discourse?

An Analysis of UN Security Council Speeches (2005–2023)

1 Motivation & Context

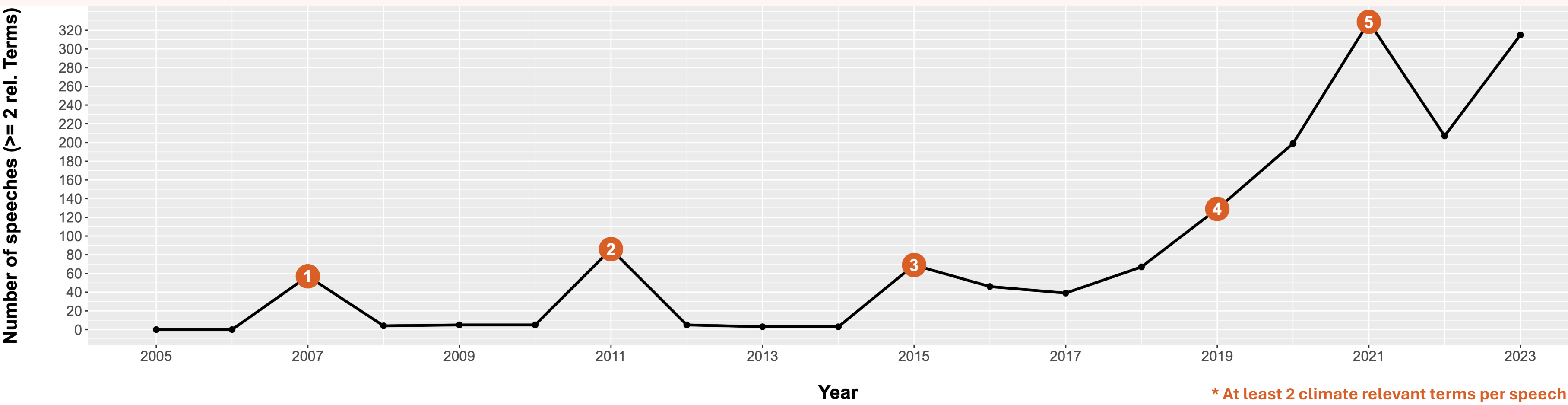
Climate change is a key global challenge that is increasingly recognized as a security threat. Nevertheless, the commitment of nations in the UN Security Council to this issue varies. It is therefore important to analyze which states in particular bring the issue of climate change into the security discourse in order to provide impetus for a more effective global climate policy.

RQ1: How often and at what times is climate change mentioned in the official speeches of the UN Security Council from 2005 to 2023?

RQ2: Which countries are driving the discourse on climate security?

3 Results

Development of the number of speeches on climate change UN Security Council (2005–2023) *



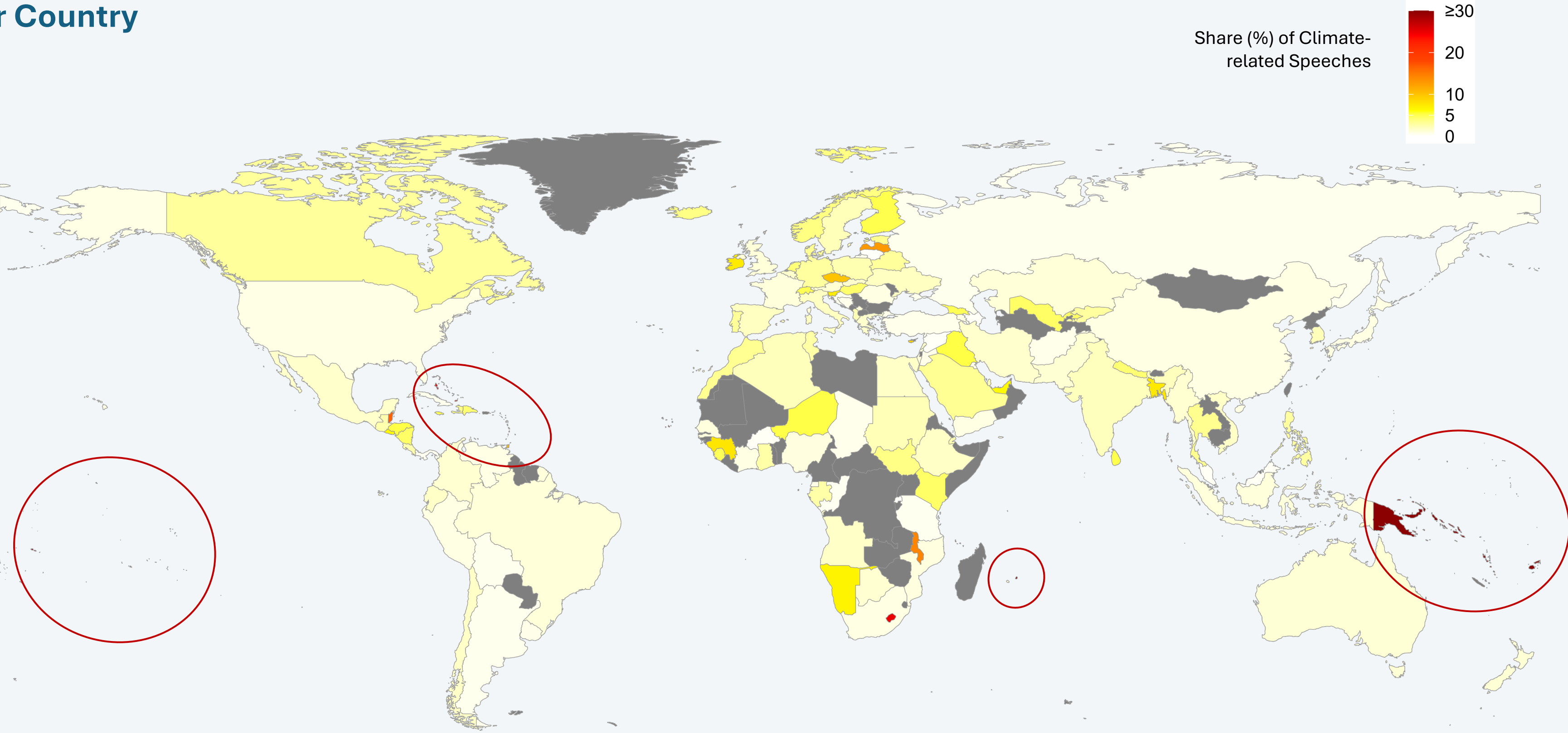
- 1 2007: First debate on the link between climate change and security in the UN Security Council, Session S/PV.5663.
- 2 2011: UN Climate Summit Copenhagen & Intensive debates in July, when Germany pushed this topic as council president.
- 3 2015: Paris Climate Agreement (COP21) brought climate change into focus worldwide.
- 4 2019: Several nations declare a “climate emergency”, significant increase in the media presence due to heat records
- 5 2021: Many countries tighten their climate targets (Net Zero by 2050, etc.); Haiti earthquake; Covid 19 Pandemic.

Frequency of Climate-Relevant Terms in the UN Security Council (2005–2023) per Country

Country	Climate related speeches	Total speeches	Share
UN	95	3926	2,42%
UAE	58	913	6,35%
UK	47	4079	1,15%
Ireland	45	611	7,36%
France	42	3718	1,13%
Germany	39	1328	2,94%
China	32	3708	0,86%
USA	31	4038	0,77%
Norway	30	786	3,81%
Saint Vincent & Grenadines	28	296	9,46%
India	25	1220	2,05%
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Russia	22	3919	0,56%

Country	Climate related speeches	Total speeches	Share
Tonga	7	7	100%
Tuvalu	7	7	100%
Nauru	5	5	100%
Micronesia	2	2	100%
Kiribati	2	2	100%
Cook Islands	1	1	100%
Vanuatu	1	1	100%
Palau	3	5	60%
Barbados	4	7	57,14%
Antigua & Barbuda	3	6	50%
Mauritius	2	4	50%
Samoa	2	4	50%
Comoros	2	1	50%
Solomon Islands	6	13	46,15%
Fiji	23	51	45,10%
Papua Neuginuea	9	22	40,91%

* Includes only climate-related speeches by states and the UN in the period 2005-2023.



Permanent member states have the most frequent total speeches. At the same time the share of climate relevant speeches is remarkably small (<2%).

Among the countries with a high total number and relative share, the UAE and St. Vincent and the Grenadines seem to bring the topic into discourses.

Among the countries with a very high share of climate-related speeches are almost exclusively small island states.

A small country like Fiji raises the issue of climate change more frequently than large nations such as Russia, Brazil or Japan.

4 Discussion & Conclusion

- From 2007 onwards, Climate change was addressed frequently in the UN Security Council.
- International agreements (Paris Agreement 2015), extreme climate events (record heat years from 2016) and increased public pressure (e.g. Fridays for Future 2021) have led to short-term increases in the discourse.

- The 5 permanent members mention climate change in less than 1.5% of their total speeches, presumably because they are less directly affected or prioritize other interests.
 - Small, highly threatened island states have fewer speeches overall, but almost always focus on climate issues.
- If they have the chance to speak, they clearly express a special concern.

Despite the **high increase**, the **frequency** of climate change related speeches remains **inconsistent** and **dependent** on political agendas, external events and media mobilization.

Despite their dominant power of speech, major powers bring climate change relatively little into the debates. However, they have a special responsibility to address security threats that affect the entire global community.

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