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**BASIC**

# Prioritising People in the Arctic

Eight Policy Proposals for Reducing Risks to Human Security

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# Introduction

This report is part of a series of three reports written by BASIC,<sup>1</sup> which address perceptions of risks and threats in the circumpolar Arctic, as influenced by climate change and shifting power dynamics in the region.<sup>2</sup>

The reports are part of the project 'Risk Reduction in the Arctic' that BASIC is undertaking in collaboration with the Department of National Defence of the Government of Canada (DND), which looks at Human Security, Risky Resources, and Canadian Submarine Recapitalisation in the Arctic.

This report addresses existing and emerging threats to human security in the Arctic and investigates the utility of different risk reduction measures in mitigating such risks. It develops eight policy proposals to promote risk reduction in the Arctic.

The analysis is informed by online qualitative interviews conducted over a period of four months and complemented by desk-based research. Our interview sample comprises sixteen participants from across the eight Arctic states. These include Arctic scholars and experts, current and former civil servants who are working or have worked with Arctic issues, Arctic Indigenous scholars and policy analysts, and Next Gen scholars. We have applied a GBA+ framework in recruiting interviewees. Eight interviewees are women and eight interviewees are men. All participants have been required to fill in a consent form before taking part in the project, to protect their confidentiality and address any ethical issue in relation to the interview. All interviews are confidential and numbered from 1 to 16.

1 The other reports are: Gry Thomasen, *Managing Resources and Sea Routes in the Arctic: Looking to the Future* (BASIC, 2022), and Timothy Choi, *Canadian Submarine Recapitalization within the context of Climate Change* (BASIC, 2022).

2 The state of affairs in the Arctic is influenced by a range of developments occurring both within and outside the Arctic. However, for the purpose of this project, we are interested in two main drivers of change: climate change and changes to power dynamics in the region. Climate change is understood to be the environmental and ecological changes as a result of rising temperatures in the Arctic, and across the globe more widely – such as sea ice retreat, changes to prevailing weather and ocean currents, and anomalous climatic events. Increasing state competition in the Arctic is understood to be the consequences of the arrival of new major powers to the region over the past decades and in the future, or changes to major power dynamics in the Arctic. State competition can be seen in several realms, such as military or political competition.

Interviews have been conducted following the '7 Questions Futures Technique'.<sup>3</sup> A sample of the questions is included in a separate appendix to this report (Appendix A). The '7 Questions' technique is a foresight method designed to understand key drivers of societal change, elicit innovative ideas, policy proposals, and future scenarios from participants. As such, the methodology matches the purpose of this report to investigate policy proposals to reduce current and future risks to human security in the Arctic.

This report does not claim to be a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the many risks that Arctic people are currently facing or will be facing in the future. Rather, the report is a step forward in devising effective and sustainable policies to address some of the most pressing risks to human security in the Arctic now and in the future.



*This report is a step forward in devising effective and sustainable policies to address some of the most pressing risks to human security in the Arctic now and in the future.*

3 '7 Questions Futures Technique', Government Office for Science, 1. May 2018. <https://foresightprojects.blog.gov.uk/2018/05/01/7-questions-futures-technique/> (accessed 1. August)

# A Summary of the Eight Policy Proposals to Address Human Security in the Arctic

## A. Develop Arctic Security Strategies Focused on Human Security

### Policy 1: Defining Practical Steps and Policies for Reducing Risks to Human Security in Arctic Strategies

None of the Arctic strategies of the A8 comprehensively address risks to human security. We recommend that all Arctic states develop Arctic strategies that set out clear, practical steps and policies for reducing risks to human security. Moreover, we encourage Arctic states to exchange best practices and knowledge in relation to human security in the Arctic Council.

## B. Encourage Sustainable Development in the Arctic

### Policy 2: Develop Resilient Infrastructures

Arctic states should invest in the region to build resilient infrastructures (transports, buildings, communication lines, and cities) tailored to resist extreme weather events and climate change. This should be done to avoid the long-term risks related to displacement, remoteness, and vulnerability of Arctic communities.

### Policy 3: Ensure Sustainable Investments

Investments in the extractive industry and the renewable energy sector should be encouraged, provided that greater cooperation, dialogue, and consultation between local communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) and companies is ensured. This should be done to

avoid the short-term risk that the investments that could enhance Arctic people's economic security and well-being simultaneously put their human security at risk. This could generate a dangerous feedback loop where local communities, and especially Indigenous Peoples, oppose investments and remain impoverished and dependent on central governments.

## C. Listen to Indigenous Peoples Voices

### Policy 4: Make the Arctic Council More Inclusive

In the short term, there is serious risk that Permanent Participants are side-tracked in the Arctic Council and that inter-state competition takes over and extinguishes the spirit and mission of the Council. To mitigate those risks, the inclusivity of the Council should be improved. Established and institutionalised processes of consultation and cooperation with Permanent Participants should be put in place on any matters, including the pause of the work of the Council. Moreover, PPs and state diplomats should discuss ways to make the agenda-setting process for Arctic Council meetings more transparent and inclusive, even if this requires reviewing and updating the current Arctic Council Rules of Procedure.

### **Policy 5: Foster Mutual Understanding through Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples**

There is often scarce understanding, amongst Arctic states central governments, of the current and future risks posed by climate change and poor economic investments to the traditional ways of life of the Indigenous peoples in the Arctic. Such risks are further aggravated by the presence of a tension between implementing urgent policies in a rapid and efficient way in the Arctic, and the slow consultation processes that underpin the Indigenous way of governing. Third-party facilitated dialogues between Arctic diplomats and Indigenous peoples could facilitate mutual understanding and encourage parties to find ways to overcome policy hurdles and cooperate to achieve the common goal of making the Arctic a more secure place for human beings to live in. Moreover, co-production of knowledge between Indigenous Peoples, scientists, and diplomats should be fostered to better address climate change in the Arctic.

### **Policy 6: Improve Transnational Connections for Indigenous Peoples**

Communication between Indigenous peoples is currently at risk and communities are increasingly siloed, partly due to the scarce infrastructures (such as poor internet connectivity) but also due to unnatural borders between communities. Arctic states could work together to increase mobility for Indigenous Peoples across state borders. Communication between Indigenous peoples can also be improved through existing transboundary dialogues such as the Arctic Leaders' Summit (ALS).

## **D. Improve Institutional Dialogue in the Arctic**

### **Policy 7: Develop a Distinct Military Forum for Cooperation**

The current pause of the Arctic Council illustrates that growing inter-state competition can put human security at risk, now and in the future, as military security issues are increasingly prioritised over cooperation on climate change and environmental issues. In the long-term, developing a military security forum distinct from the Arctic Council would potentially ensure that Arctic cooperation on human security is preserved and continued in the Council even in the face of increasing regional security competition.

### **Policy 8: Unpausing the Arctic Council: Which Way Forward?**

The current pause of the Arctic Council is posing risks to human security, mainly because the work on climate change and environmental cooperation is on hold. There is no substitute for the Arctic Council when it comes to Arctic cooperation and its work must be restarted. In the short term, the A7 and the Permanent Participants could restart cooperation without Russia. However, in the long-term, and after the Ukraine war is ended, Russia should be welcomed back to the Council because Arctic cooperation without Russia is simply not sustainable. The A7 will have to find a way to resume work with Russia on human security, climate change, resilience and adaptation strategies, as security issues should be left outside of the Council and discussed in a distinct military security forum (see Policy 7).



## PART II

# The Arctic

The Arctic is a polar region comprising the Arctic Ocean, its adjacent seas, and land territories where eight different countries exercise sovereignty: Canada, Denmark via Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States (Alaska).

Except for Iceland, all of these countries have Indigenous Peoples who have inhabited the lands of Arctic territories for thousands of years.

There are over forty ethnic groups in the Arctic, including but not limited to 'Saami in circumpolar areas of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Northwest Russia, Nenets, Khanty, Evenk and Chukchi in Russia, Aleut, Yupik and Inuit (Iñupiat) in Alaska, Inuit (Inuvialuit) in Canada, Inuit (Kalaallit) in Greenland', and Eskimo (Inuit) in Russia's Chukotka Autonomous Area and Magadan Region.<sup>4</sup>

Whilst there is no overarching sovereign institution governing the Arctic region – each Arctic state retains complete sovereignty on their own territory and on its exclusive economic zone, as prescribed by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – the eight Arctic states (A8) cooperate through the Arctic Council (AC). The Arctic Council, established with the Ottawa Declaration in 1996, is an intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation particularly on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. It comprises the A8, and six Permanent Participants representing six Indigenous Peoples' organisations. These are: the Aleut International Association (AIA), Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), Gwich'in Council International (GCI), Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Saami Council. Outside the Arctic Council members, there are observer parties: intergovernmental and interparliamentary organisations, non governmental organisations and states. Observer states have a relatively limited decision-making power, such as proposing projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.<sup>5</sup> As of 2022, the Observer States are: Germany (1998), Netherlands (1998), Poland (1998), United Kingdom (1998), France (2000), Spain (2006), China (2013), India (2013), Italy (2013), Japan (2013), South Korea (2013), Singapore (2013), Switzerland (2017).

Although we use the term 'Arctic' throughout this report, it is important to note that there are many 'Arctics in the Arctic.' The Arctic is not a cohesive region of states, territories, and populations sharing the same characteristics, hence the term 'Arctic' is in itself quite a misnomer. This is why, during our interviews, we often asked participants to share their knowledge about a specific Arctic – the one they knew best.

<sup>4</sup> 'Arctic Indigenous Peoples', Arctic Centre, *University of Lapland*. <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples> (accessed 3. August 2022).

<sup>5</sup> 'Arctic Council Observers', *Arctic Council*. <https://www.arctic-council.org/about/observers/> (accessed 1. August 2022)



***People in the Arctic are extremely diverse, comprising Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and LGBTQIA2S+ communities, whose security needs should be differentiated.***

What emerged is that there are differences between the 'European' Arctic (Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, the Kingdom of Denmark (Greenland and Faroe Islands)), the Canadian-American Arctic (Canada and the United States (Alaska)), and the Russian Arctic [Interview 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16]. Such areas display geographical differences in relation to size of territory, density of population, remoteness, extreme weather events, presence of urban/rural areas, and are thus differently impacted by climate change.<sup>6</sup> There are also significant differences in terms of lack/presence of transports and infrastructure as well as access to healthcare and higher education for Indigenous peoples, especially between Norway and the other Arctic states [Interview 3, 6, 16]. Moreover, people in the Arctic are extremely diverse, comprising Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and LGBTQIA2S+<sup>7</sup> communities, whose security needs should be differentiated.<sup>8</sup>

6 Even within the same groups, there can be relevant differences, such as between the US and Canada and between Greenland and Norway.

7 LGBTQIA2S+ refers to: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit. 'Two-Spirit' is a term used within some Indigenous communities, encompassing cultural, spiritual, sexual and gender identity.

8 Gunhild Hoogensen Gjorv and Sarah Sea Brook Kendall, 'The Arctic Biggest Security Challenge: Climate Change and Environmental Security' in *Pan-Arctic Report: Gender Equality in the Arctic, Phase 3* (2021). p. 92.





## Is the Arctic Really ‘Exceptional’?

‘Arctic Exceptionalism’ is a narrative which proposes that the Arctic is unique – exceptional – as the region has not been a theatre of conflict and/or proxy wars since World War II, constituting a ‘buffer zone’ between the Soviet Union and the US during the Cold War years.<sup>9</sup> Not only have the Arctic states not engaged in conflict with one another, in or over the Arctic, they also have cooperated numerous times to address environmental issues, climate change, and search and rescue activities.

As Lackenbauer notes, Arctic Exceptionalism is predicated on the assumption that the region is at once ‘beautiful and terrifying, awesome and exotic, a world apart’<sup>10</sup> – a belief often rooted in an unfounded perception that the Arctic, by virtue of its remoteness and exoticness, is immune to regional and global security developments [Interview 3, 6].

Amplifying the narrative of Arctic Exceptionalism, the Russian Annexation of Crimea in March 2014 had a relatively limited impact on the activities of the Arctic Council, despite the seven other Arctic states condemning Moscow’s actions.<sup>11</sup> While military-to-military cooperation between Russia and the A7 was suspended, collaboration in other fields continued through the working groups of the Arctic Council, search and rescue activities, fisheries, continental shelves, and navigation.<sup>12</sup>

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, however, showed that the Arctic is not immune to conflict spillover, seriously questioning the Arctic exceptionalism narrative. On March 3rd 2022, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the United States paused their ‘participation in all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies’ and stated that their representatives would not ‘travel to Russia for meetings of the Arctic Council’, which holds the Arctic Council chairmanship from 2021 to 2023.<sup>13</sup> The pausing of the Arctic Council for such a long period of time is unprecedented and shows that global developments can deeply affect the Arctic. Rather than being ‘exceptional’, the Arctic can be the theatre of inter-state political competition.

9 Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv and Kara Kathleen Hodgson, ‘Arctic exceptionalism’ or ‘comprehensive security’? Understanding security in the Arctic.’ (2019). p. 2.

10 P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Ryan Dean, ‘Arctic Exceptionalisms’, in *The Arctic and World Order*, ed. Kristina Spohr and Daniel Hamilton. (Foreign Policy Institute: 2020).

11 Malgorzata Smieszek and Paula Kankaanpää, ‘Role of the Arctic Council Chairmanship’. *Arctic Yearbook*, 4. (2019) pp. 247-262.

12 Michael Beyers, ‘Crises and International Cooperation: an Arctic Case Study’. *International Relations*, 31:4. (2017). pp. 375-402. doi:10.1177/0047117817735680.

13 ‘Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine’, *US Department of State*, 3. March 2022. <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-arctic-council-cooperation-following-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/> (accessed 22. July 2022).

# Human Security in the Arctic

In the circumpolar Arctic, state-centric conceptions of security have been employed by scholars and have informed Arctic states policies and strategies for decades.<sup>14</sup>

However, in recent years, scholars have increasingly used the human security approach to get a deeper understanding of Arctic security dynamics.<sup>15</sup>

The human security approach broadens the mainstream International Relations conception of security as the protection of states sovereignty and territorial integrity against external attacks.<sup>16</sup> The approach frames the individual as the main security actor and focuses on socioeconomic indicators such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.<sup>17</sup> The first comprehensive conceptualisation of human security can be traced back to a report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published in 1994.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, human security has been defined as ‘freedom from fear (violence and repression) and freedom from want (chronic suffering and privation)’.<sup>19</sup> Following the UN, states in the international milieu have increasingly focused their policy agendas on human security, especially Canada, Norway, and Japan.<sup>20</sup>

Human security has both a ‘negative’ and a ‘positive’ dimension, implying not only the absence of fear and threats, but also the possibility of individuals to be empowered and enabled to build capacities and live a good life.<sup>21</sup> Crucially, adopting a human security approach is both an analytical and a political choice and implies ‘recognizing and allowing that different actors other than the state are given the power to have their primary concerns and values heard’.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, by focusing on human security in the circumpolar Arctic,

14 Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv et al., ‘Human Security in the Arctic: The IPY GAPS Project’ in *Implications and Consequences of Anthropogenic Pollution in Polar Environments*, ed. Roland Kallenborn (Springer Berlin, Heidelberg: 2016) pp. 184-5.

15 It should be noted that Russian scholars take a slightly more nuanced approach to human security, using alternative terms such as ‘societal security’ or socio-economic development [Interviews 14, 15]. Moreover, the majority of Russian scholars tend to look at Arctic security from a ‘traditional’ perspective, focusing on the military security and economic risks and threats stemming from other Arctic states’ policies and strategies. See Demyan Plakhov, ‘Human Security in the Arctic: A Review of the Russian Literature’, *NAADSN Policy Primer* (2022). Retrieved from <https://naadsn.ca/>.

16 Amitav Acharya, ‘Human Security’, in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 481.

17 UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security*. (New York: 1994); Acharya, ‘Human Security’, p. 482.

18 UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, p.23.

19 Wilfrid Greaves, ‘For Whom, from What?: Canada’s Arctic Policy and the Narrowing of Human Security.’ *International Journal*, 67:1 (March 2012).p. 221. doi: 10.1177/002070201206700115.

20 Acharya, ‘Human Security’, p. 482; Greaves, ‘For Whom, For What’; Gjørsv et al., ‘Human Security in the Arctic’.

21 Gjørsv et al., ‘Human Security in the Arctic’, pp. 185-6; see also Ken Booth, ‘Security and Emancipation’ *Review of International Studies*, 17:4, October 1991, pp. 313 - 326. doi:10.1017/S0260210500112033

22 Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv and Marina Goloviznina, ‘Introduction’, in *Environmental and Human Security in the Arctic*, ed. Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv, Dawn Bazely, Marina Goloviznina, Andrew Tanentzap. (London: Routledge, 2014). p. 2.



this report seeks to encourage governments and civil society actors in the region to recognise that all humans living in the Arctic – including and especially Indigenous peoples – are security actors whose voices need to be heard.

Climate change is exacerbating risks to human security in the Arctic, impacting infrastructures, available food supplies, business practices, and Indigenous People's traditional ways of life. The Arctic is experiencing 'a cascading series of acute effects' of global climate change, resulting in significant ecosystem changes with alarming socio-economic consequences for humans living in the region.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Arctic is home to approximately 500,000 Indigenous peoples who are on the front lines of climate change, often experiencing the bulk of changes that are not of their own making.<sup>24</sup> Environmental changes in the Arctic include warmer temperatures, sea ice melting, changing precipitation patterns, unusual ice break up patterns on rivers and lakes, thawing permafrost, flooding and streamflow changes, coastal erosion, invasive species, and more frequent extreme weather events such as intense storms, landslides, and wildfires.<sup>25</sup>

Using a human security approach is therefore crucial to understand the key policy challenges that need to be addressed in the Arctic. The eight Arctic sovereign states neither prioritise human security equally nor utilise human security concepts in their national security policies in a consistent manner. This report outlines the need for all Arctic states to prioritise risks to human security in their Arctic agendas and develop common but differentiated strategies to address such risks across the region.

Notably, focusing on human security does not imply dismissing military threats and discounting the importance of the state as a major security actor. Indeed, human security can complement state-centred approaches, as the level of competition or cooperation between Arctic Council states can have profound indirect effects on human security issues in the region. A case point is the recent interruption of the work of the Arctic Council as a result of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Cooperation on environmental and socio-economic issues in the region is currently frozen until an unknown date, with dramatic repercussions for Arctic people whose living conditions are increasingly worsening.

23 Wilfried Greaves, 'Cities and human security in a warming Arctic', in *Climate Change and Arctic Security*, ed. Heininen, Lassi, and Heather Exner-Pirot (New York: Springer International Publishing), pp. 61-89.

24 Nikoosh Carlo, *Arctic Observing: Indigenous Peoples' History, Perspectives, and Approaches for Partnership*. Fairbanks: Center for Arctic Policy Studies (2020). p.5

25 Gjørvi and Kendall, 'The Arctic Biggest Security Challenge: Climate Change and Environmental Security' 2021, p. 78; Wilfrid Greaves, 'Cities and human security in a warming Arctic' in *Climate Change and Arctic Security*, ed. Heininen, Lassi, and Heather Exner-Pirot. (Springer International Publishing, 2020: 61-89) p. 70.

# Risk Reduction Measures to Address Human Security in the Arctic

## A. Develop Arctic Security Strategies Focused on Human Security

### POLICY 1

#### Defining Practical Steps and Policies for Reducing Risks to Human Security in Arctic Strategies

The first, overarching policy proposal that emerged from our interviews with experts in human security in the Arctic is very straightforward: the eight Arctic states should develop Arctic strategies focused on human security [Interview 1, 3, 6, 10, 15]. Norway, Sweden, and especially Canada have actively promoted the human security approach in their foreign policies, whilst the other Arctic states have dealt with socio-economic security issues without referring explicitly to human security.<sup>26</sup> However, none of the A8 Arctic strategies comprehensively address risks to human security. This is particularly concerning given the increasing risks and threats that Arctic inhabitants are experiencing now, and are likely to experience in the future. We therefore recommend that all Arctic states develop future Arctic strategies with a clear focus on policies to address risks to human security. Such Arctic strategies should set out clear, practical steps for reducing pressing risks to human security in each country. The policy proposals that we develop in the following pages are intended to guide Arctic states in developing these practical steps to be included in their future Arctic strategies. In addition, given that there are many 'Arctics in the Arctic', it is important that Arctic states exchange their best practices and knowledge in the Arctic Council in relation to human security, learning from one another when it comes to infrastructure buildings, investments, and Indigenous governance as some states might have more experience than others in different policy areas [Interview 2, 16]. For example, Norway is particularly well-placed to share with other Arctic States its best-practices in ensuring access to higher education and healthcare for Indigenous Peoples [Interview 3, 6, 16].

## B. Encourage Sustainable Development in the Arctic

### **POLICY 2** Develop Resilient Infrastructures

When asked to paint an optimistic but realistic scenario for human security in the Arctic in the next couple of decades, most of our interviewees depicted a region with resilient and functioning infrastructures [Interviews 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15]. They explained that – contrary to common perceptions – the Arctic is not a ‘frozen tundra’ and large numbers of people reside in the region, often in urbanised communities.<sup>27</sup> As one diplomat put it, ‘we are not talking about a wilderness, with foxes and caribous, but of actual homes for human beings’ [Interview 9]. Especially in Canada, the US, Russia, and Greenland, the scarce quantity or quality of infrastructure is currently putting human security at risk – ‘it can take weeks, months to go to the doctor’ [Interview 14] – as local communities are increasingly remote, isolated, and vulnerable. The scarcity of roads and transports significantly increases the prices of imported goods such as oil, food, and gas [Interviews 6, 12]. This, coupled with local low-income salaries and high unemployment rates, makes life really costly for Arctic people [Interviews 6, 12]. Moreover, climate change is increasingly making some infrastructures particularly vulnerable due to warming temperatures, permafrost thawing, rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events. These infrastructures include transportation, buildings, communications, energy, and storage and containment facilities for mine waste and tailings.<sup>28</sup> As pointed out by several interviewees, in some places – such as the Canadian Arctic – roads, buildings, and internet lines are not tailored to resist extreme weather events [Interviews 4, 5]. With climate change worsening, northerners could be forced to migrate out of the Arctic and relocate, detaching from their historic lands and houses [Interviews 3, 4, 15, 16]. One interviewee reported that their greatest fear is that, in the long term, ‘the Arctic will become an empty place, a terra incognita’ [Interview 15; see also 16].

To prevent this from happening, interviewees suggested that massive investments are needed, especially in the northern territories of Canada, Alaska, Greenland and Russia, to build resilient infrastructures [Interviews 6, 10, 12, 14, 15]. However, there is often scarce political will on the part of the Arctic states central governments to invest in their northern territories, as investments in the Arctic are considered ‘unpopular’ [Interviews 10, 12, 16]. This generates a disconnect between central governments and the Arctic people, which negatively impacts human security in the Arctic. As one interviewee put it, ‘there is a need for housing and they give a lot of money to solar panels which is not a priority for local communities, especially for Indigenous peoples’ [Interview 12; see also Interview 9]. In the next ten to twenty years, this lack of essential infrastructures tailored to resist extreme weather events will increase the remoteness and vulnerability of Arctic communities, heightening the risks of displacement. This highlights the need for more consultation between central governments and Arctic people, to identify priorities for new investments and find ways to balance the benefits of such investments with the impact that new infrastructures might have on the environment, the wildlife, and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples.<sup>29</sup>

27 Greaves, ‘Cities and human security’, p. 65.

28 Greaves, ‘Cities and human security’, p. 75.

29 ‘Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders’ Summit’, *Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat*, 2019. <https://www.arcticpeoples.com/youth#arctic-leaders-youth-summit> (accessed 25. July 2022).

Moreover, governments should invest to develop innovative, progressive, and resilient Arctic cities [Interview 6, 15]. For example, the Soviet Union had developed innovative projects and ideas for developing Arctic cities and the Russian government is currently resuming such projects.<sup>30</sup> Arctic cities should be empowered to develop '[local] Arctic economies that are reliant on natural resource extraction, tourism, and other industries that require large pools of skilled labour'.<sup>31</sup> Whilst climate change is often seen as having only negative impacts, cities and communities can also benefit from warmer temperatures for agriculture, tourism, and fishery [Interviews 3, 5]. Put differently, Arctic cities could create job opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to increase their food, economic, and personal security and reduce dependency on central governments' investments [Interviews 3, 6, 12]. As explained in the 2019 Declaration of the First Arctic Indigenous Youth Leaders Summit, Indigenous peoples acknowledge 'the interest and curiosity in our lands by the world outside the circumpolar north resulting in increased tourism in our traditional lands'.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Indigenous peoples recognise the need to take 'control of [their] fisheries because [they] are the best suited to adapt and manage this resource as [they] face rising temperatures, the migration of fishery, and have an understanding of how much fish can be taken from the waters to ensure for the next generation of fish and peoples'.<sup>33</sup>

### POLICY 3 Ensure Sustainable Investments

Globalisation, and the surge for fossil resources at the turn of the century, meant that the Arctic, which had remained relatively untouched compared to other regions in the world, became the target of mining companies in search of more resources to extract. However, economic investments (especially those connected to resource extractions) are a double-edged sword for human security in the Arctic. As pointed out by some interviewees, extractive industries can either have a positive or negative impact on Arctic human security, depending on how such activities and investments are carried out [Interview 6, 12].

Extractive industry development can bring economic benefits to the circumpolar Arctic and its inhabitants, as the region has a significantly low employment rate. This unemployment gap is further exacerbated between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous local inhabitants of the Arctic. According to the Canadian Government, in 2016, 'among the Inuit working age population in Nunavut, 45% were employed while 18% were unemployed and 37% were not in the labour force', whilst 89% of the non-Inuit working age population were employed, with 3% unemployed and 8% not in the labour force.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the unemployment rate among Russia's Indigenous peoples 'has been estimated at between 30 percent and 60 percent, which is 3 to 4 times higher than that of other residents of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation'.<sup>35</sup>

However, poor methods of extraction can be associated with increased pollution and can endanger biodiversity. Moreover, resource extraction has impacted the security of some Indigenous peoples in some areas of the Canadian Arctic. A report from Qamani'tua, Nunavut, explains that 'community members reported the loss of caribou directly connected to the Meadowbank mine [and] have stopped fishing or

30 'A bright future for Arctic cities', Arctic Russia, 21. July 2021. <https://arctic-russia.ru/en/article/a-bright-future-for-arctic-cities/> (accessed 9. August 2022).

31 Greaves, 'Cities and human security', p. 68.

32 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

33 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

34 'Nunavut Inuit Labour Force Analysis report. Executive Summary, August 2018', *Government of Canada*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/research/nunavut-inuit-labour-force-analysis-summary.html> (accessed 4. August 2022).

35 Sergunin et al., 'Human Security in the Arctic'.



gathering near the mine'.<sup>36</sup> Women have reported increased incidents of racism, harassment, and domestic violence in relation to the Meadowbank mine.<sup>37</sup> Arctic extractive industry development should be aware that risks to the security of Indigenous women can be dangerous side-effects of mining projects, as it has frequently been the case with attacks and rape in Papua Nuova Guinea, Nigeria, and Myanmar.<sup>38</sup> Although Arctic states generally have strong legal and regulatory systems, companies should keep a close eye on human rights violations especially when the project is enacted in a remote, rural community and requires 'large groups of transient, outside, mostly male, workers to be brought into the area'.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, Arctic people face a trade-off: the investments that could enhance their economic security and well-being could simultaneously put their human security at risk, if proper risk reduction measures are not put in place. This triggers a feedback loop where local communities, and especially Indigenous peoples, tend to oppose investments because they feel that their personal and community security can be put at risk. However, by opposing investments, communities remain poor, remote, and dependent on their central governments [Interview 6, 12].



*Economic investments (especially those connected to resource extractions) are a double-edged sword for human security in the Arctic.*

36 Victoria Sweet, 'Extracting More than Resources: Human Security and Arctic Indigenous Women', *Seattle University Law Review*, 37:4, 2014. P. 1169 <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2533164>.

37 Karina Czyzewski, et al. *Impact of Resource Extraction on Inuit Women and Families in Qamani'tuaq, Nunavut Territory*. Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2016.

38 Sweet, 'Extracting More than Resources', p. 1163.

39 Sweet, 'Extracting More than Resources', p. 1165.



## Great Power Competition for Resources in the Arctic: Myth or Reality?

It is common perception amongst International Relations scholars that ecosystem changes in the Arctic, such as ice melting, will lead to the opening of new sea routes and to easier access to previously unavailable natural resources, which will in turn attract more foreign actors and outsider investors in the region.<sup>40</sup>

However, our interviewees explained to us that this 'race for resources' narrative is often misplaced and overly alarmist [Interview 3, 9, 12, 13]. Even if the ice is melting, extreme weather events still make resources drilling offshore not very feasible in the Arctic – as one participant put it, 'the Arctic will not be a picnic area to go through' [Interview 3, 13].

When asked about whether foreign investments, and especially Chinese investments, could be a potential threat for human security in the Arctic, one non-Indigenous interviewee pointed out that 'the China threat narrative is our fight, not [the Indigenous peoples'] fight' [Interview 12]. Other interviewees explained to us that local communities and Indigenous peoples could potentially benefit from investments from non-Arctic countries such as China. However, any investments – be it Chinese or not – come with potential negative outcomes for human security, such as exploitation of their land or people [Interview 9, 12, 16]. As stated above, many areas in the Arctic lack infrastructures such as roads, with places only accessible by planes and the arrival of foreign investment can be beneficial for some aspects of human security, providing economic security to local and Indigenous peoples. This explains why the arrival of Chinese investors in the Arctic, which has been heavily criticised by Western governments, has been welcomed by some Indigenous communities [Interview 3, 16]. Foreign and Chinese investments can be appealing to Arctic people, especially if there is a lack of investments from central governments [Interview 3, 16].

Some interviewees stressed that China has a poor track record when it comes to human rights and this should be taken into account – however, China is not investing much in the Arctic compared to European countries and Australia [Interview 12]. An Indigenous interviewee noted that the point is not China per se, but rather the scarce consultation with Indigenous peoples when it comes to any investments (be it Chinese or not), which are normally subject to government-to-government consultation only [Interview 11].

40 Sweet, 'Extracting More than Resources', p. 1160. See also Gry Thomsen, *Managing Resources and Sea Routes in the Arctic: Looking to the Future* (BASIC, 2022).

Investments in the renewable energy sector in the region face the same trade-off. Whilst potentially beneficial for the environment and climate change, such investments can put human security at risk if proper collaboration measures are not put in place [Interview 3]. For example, large-scale wind power facilities have been installed within mountain regions of the Norwegian and Swedish Arctic where the Indigenous Sámi people 'have reindeer herding rights based on their historical land use of the areas'.<sup>41</sup> Such investments are perceived as practices of dispossession and neo-colonialism up to the point that the Sámi parliament's president, Aili Keskitalo, has referred to it as 'green colonialism'.<sup>42</sup>

As made clear in the 2019 declaration of the first Arctic Indigenous Youth Leaders summit, Indigenous peoples are aware of the benefits that regulated investments in the renewable energy sector could bring to the Arctic environment.<sup>43</sup> The Declaration, which deserves quoting at length, states:

*'we recognize the need for a transition away from fossil fuel energy to come into a more balanced relationship with our environment. We can be leaders in this movement if and when our rights to self-determine our lands are upheld. Thorough evaluations of the impacts of solar, wind, hydro and other green energies must be conducted and consulted with the local Indigenous people prioritised before any development happens. We will encourage our communities to aspire to energy solutions that are aligned with the health and wellbeing of our people, lands, waters, and animals and look forward to the support of the international community in these efforts.'*<sup>44</sup>

Similarly, an Indigenous interviewee suggested that various Indigenous peoples, such as Inuit from Greenland, Russian Indigenous peoples, and Sámi in Europe could get together to discuss ways to deal with climate change, grow their own food, and transition to electric vehicles [Interview 14].

In order to break the trade-off in relation to Arctic investments in the extractive industry and the renewable energy sectors, governments should encourage companies to carry out sustainable investments in the circumpolar Arctic and make them accountable for the risks for human security. Investments should be regulated and local communities, especially Indigenous peoples, should be consulted. Several interviewees mentioned that there needs to be greater cooperation and dialogue between local communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) and companies [Interview 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12]. Such cooperation can take several forms. First, local and Indigenous People should be hired where possible,<sup>45</sup> and with good working conditions. As an interviewee explained, 'projects themselves aren't a problem, but the way they are done could be a problem. The threat is if the project doesn't respect a community's interests, both from a human and from an environmental perspective' [Interview 5]. Second, companies should draw agreements with Indigenous peoples that can cover 'a wide range of matters, including land rights, compensation, revenue sharing, education, health, employment, consultation processes, and environmental, social and cultural heritage impacts'.<sup>46</sup> Third, companies (and, more generally, governments) need to have a deeper knowledge of Indigenous culture and values – a theme that will be addressed in the next section of this report.

41 Susanne Normann, 'Green colonialism in the Nordic context: Exploring Southern Saami representations of wind energy development,' *Journal of Community Psychology*, 49.1 (2021), p. 80. doi:10.1002/jcop.22422

42 Normann, 'Green colonialism', p. 81.

43 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

44 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

45 In some cases, the local professional population might be too small, such as in Greenland, with companies having to bring in hundreds of foreign workers [Interview 2].

46 Anthony Kung, et al. 'Indigenous co-ownership of mining projects: a preliminary framework for the critical examination of equity participation', *Journal of Energy & Natural Resources Law*. (2022). doi:10.1080/02646811.2022.2029184





## C. Listen To Indigenous Peoples Voices

### POLICY 4

#### Make the Arctic Council More Inclusive

Earlier in this report, we highlighted the uniqueness of the Arctic Council, which is composed not only of the eight Arctic States, but of six indigenous groups, which have been granted the Permanent Participant status. The Arctic Council states that ‘the Permanent Participants have full consultation rights in connection with the Council’s negotiations and decisions’.<sup>47</sup> However, it must be noted that the Permanent Participants (PPs) were not consulted when the A7 decided to stop sending their diplomats to meetings of the Arctic Council in March 2022, de facto pausing the Council’s activities [Interview 13]. According to a diplomat that we have interviewed, this lack of consultation was not intended but a side-effect of the seven Arctic states taking urgent actions to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine – that being the case, consultations with the PPs should have been prioritised [Interview 13]. This highlights that there can be structural flaws in the Arctic Council that side-tracks PPs vis-à-vis Arctic states. While it is understandable that diplomats can get really pressured by politics in times of crisis, Arctic diplomats should make sure that state politics do not overcome institutionalised processes of consultation and cooperation with the Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council [Interview 13].

Whilst decisions of the Arctic Council are taken by consensus among the eight Arctic Council states ‘with full consultation and involvement of the Permanent Participants’,<sup>48</sup> the latter do not have voting rights. An interviewee<sup>49</sup> noted that this was a deliberate choice, as the AC is a ‘quasi international body’, where the states – through their foreign ministries – are the main decision-making actors. An interviewee working closely with Inuits shared with us that Greenlandic Inuits were perceiving the Arctic Council as increasingly becoming a ‘Westphalian institution’ [Interview 7]. This perception was shared with an Indigenous interviewee, who noted that, whilst there is knowledge sharing and co-production, the Council is still dominated by power struggles between Arctic states, as illustrated by the current pause of cooperation as a

47 ‘Permanent Participants’, Arctic Council. <https://www.arctic-council.org/about/permanent-participants/> (accessed 20. July 2022)

48 ‘How We Work’, Arctic Council. <https://www.arctic-council.org/explore/work/> (accessed 3. August 2022)

49 Interview 16, part of the Arctic ‘Risky Resources’ Project.



result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine [Interview 11]. Moreover, they denounced that states still dominate and set the agenda for Arctic Council meetings [Interview 11]. Indeed, 'during their chairmanships, Arctic Council member States obtain a special agenda-setting position: they are able to raise awareness on certain issues, to structure the agenda in accordance with their national interests, and to exclude unfavourable issues from the agenda or to position them at last, which then are more likely to remain unaddressed due to often experienced time constraints.'<sup>50</sup>

Arctic states and their diplomats should keep in mind that the Arctic Council was created in the spirit of cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to address common Arctic (and especially environmental) issues. State diplomats and Permanent Participants should have equal voices on the management of environmental issues. However, in the short term, there is serious risk that Permanent Participants are side-tracked in the Arctic Council and that inter-state competition takes over and extinguishes the spirit and mission of the Council. To mitigate those risks, the inclusivity of the Arctic Council should be improved. This could be done in many ways. First, inter-state competition should not take over consultation processes. Permanent Participants should be consulted on any matter regarding the Council, including the pause of its work, through established and institutionalised processes of consultation and cooperation. Moreover, PPs and state diplomats should discuss ways to make the agenda-setting process for Arctic Council meetings more transparent and inclusive, especially since PPs do not have voting rights [Interview 14]. This might require reviewing and updating the current Arctic Council Rules of Procedure.<sup>51</sup> Finally, Indigenous words and language could be used in Arctic Council meetings and deliberations, as sometimes translation is not enough because there are no equivalent words in non-Indigenous languages [Interview 14].

## POLICY 5

### Foster Mutual Understanding through Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples

Several interviewees (including but not limited to Indigenous peoples) reported that diplomats and policy-makers within Arctic states tend to have a poor understanding of, and consequently scarce engagement with, Indigenous peoples' worldviews [Interview 6, 10, 11, 12]. As one interviewee put it, 'diplomats often refer to 'Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing' without really knowing what they are talking about' [Interview 11], using an institutionalised motto to cover up a rudimentary knowledge of such worldviews. This lack of understanding is particularly harmful for Arctic Indigenous peoples in that they feel that their lands and animals – to which they are intimately and spiritually connected – are unprotected and increasingly at risk due to climate change and poorly regulated economic investments.

Far from just being access to subsistence, food security is for many Indigenous peoples a direct access to their culture, their language, their land – to their 'Indigeneity' [Interview 6, 11, 14].<sup>52</sup> Whether it is fishing, whaling, hunting, reindeer husbandry, or cattle and horse breeding, it is crucial for Indigenous peoples to have 'constant access to traditional sources of food' [Interview 14]. As an Indigenous interviewee explained to us, non-Indigenous northerners hunt and fish for their food, but are not dependent on those activities and climate change is mostly affecting their job security. On the other hand, they explained that for Indigenous

50 Dorothea Wehrmann, 'Shaping changing circumpolar agendas: The identification and significance of 'emerging issues' addressed in the Arctic Council', *Arctic Yearbook* (2016).

51 Arctic Council Rules of Procedure (September 1998, Revised May 2023). [https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/940/2015-09-01\\_Rules\\_of\\_Procedure\\_website\\_version.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y](https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/940/2015-09-01_Rules_of_Procedure_website_version.pdf?sequence=7&isAllowed=y)

52 For example, Alaskan Inuits have their own definition of food security as: 'the natural right of all Inuit to be part of the ecosystem, to access food and to care-take, protect and respect all of life, land, water, and air. It allows for all Inuit to obtain process, store and consume sufficient amounts of health and nutrition preferred foods—foods physically and spiritually craved and needed from the land, air and water, which provide for families and future generations through the practice of Inuit customs and spirituality, languages, knowledge, policies, management practices and self-governance.' (Carlo, 'Arctic Observing', 2020 p. 9).

peoples 'it is not enough to go to the supermarket' in case a traditional source of food cannot be found in nature [Interview 14]. Far from being just a means to an end, management and consumption of traditional food is a matter of identity for Indigenous peoples and reinforces social cohesion and spirituality in the group and a sense of belonging [Interview 6, 11, 14].

However, food security, and related Indigenous traditional ways of life, are increasingly at risk in the circumpolar Arctic due to climate change and poor economic investments. Local industrial activities (especially in the Russian, Norwegian, and Swedish Arctic), transboundary toxic chemicals, such as persistent organic pollutants, and permafrost thawing are increasingly polluting the Arctic [Interview 6, 14].<sup>53</sup> Warmer temperatures are facilitating the capacity of such pollutants to degrade in the environment, contaminating Arctic waters, plants, animals, and also culminating in humans, increasing cancer rates and causing neurological damage in childrens, amongst other deleterious effects [Interview 14].<sup>54</sup> The physical and health security of all Arctic people is at risk, and for Indigenous peoples, their traditional livelihoods are in danger. For example, whaling or berry-picking are social activities that require preparing in advance and choosing the 'right' land where to practice the activity – a polluted or inaccessible land could endanger the social cohesion and identity of Indigenous peoples [Interview 14]. Simply put, Indigenous peoples should be able to hunt, fish, have their own cattle and horse, have access to whale meat, and berry picking in their lands – not just because of their diet, but because it is a chance to practise their traditional ways of life [Interview 11, 14].

These needs are to be acknowledged and addressed by Arctic states through dialogue with Indigenous peoples based on mutual understanding. Mutual understanding is also required to find ways to ensure that urgent policies, such as building infrastructures and making economic investments, are implemented in the Arctic. As highlighted in the previous section, infrastructures and investments could ensure a prosperous future for all humans in the Arctic, however, consultation and agreement with Indigenous peoples must be prioritised. Our interviewees identified a tension between the urgency of implementing policies in a rapid and efficient way, and the slow consultation processes that underpin the Indigenous way of governing [Interview 10, 11, 12]. Indigenous peoples don't just 'show up and sign agreements' – before signing policy agreements, they have a duty to report back to their community and find consensus within the community, bearing a 'responsibility to speak to their people' [Interview 11]. However, this can slow down processes of policy implementation, where urgent and pressing solutions are required to mitigate the risks to human security in the Arctic [Interview 12].

Third-party facilitated dialogues focused on mutual understanding could help overcome such tensions and policy hurdles. These types of dialogues could reduce mutual distrust and help parties to focus on areas of commonality, such as joint policy proposals and risk reduction measures, without ignoring points of conflict and division.<sup>55</sup> Simply put, third-party facilitated dialogues could encourage Arctic diplomats and Indigenous peoples to understand each other's view-points, with the aim of achieving the common goal of making the Arctic a more secure place for human beings to live in. It should be noted that dialogue should start with a deep appreciation, on the part of Arctic diplomats, of how colonialism has shaped the roots of systemic injustice and inequity for Indigenous peoples. This would help both sides to move on and build an even relationship – as an Indigenous scholar put it, 'historical trauma is real and to be acknowledged; however, it does not define our future'.<sup>56</sup> Alongside a formal, third-party facilitated dialogue, cultural exchanges with Indigenous peoples could also be encouraged by setting up informal meetings (for example, in the Arctic Council) focused on Indigenous arts and literature [Interview 14].

53 Greaves, 'Cities and human security', p. 72 ; Sergunin et al., 'Human Security in the Arctic', pp. 13-4.

54 Greaves, 'Cities and human security', p. 72.

55 Chiara Cervasio and Rishi Paul, *Different Perceptions, Shared Understandings: Towards a Responsibility-Based Regime to Reduce Nuclear Risks in the Asia-Pacific* (BASIC-ICCS dialogue report, March 2022).

56 Carlo, 'Arctic Observing', p. 6.

## The Value of Mutual Understanding: an Indigenous Perspective

An Indigenous interviewee stressed the importance of mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Arctic people in a beautiful passage of their interview that deserves quoting at length:

*'There is a concept of two-eyed seeing, in which there is an argument that we can accept multiple sources of knowledge. So I can say for example, 'sky is green', and you say 'sky is blue'. And then I don't have to accept your point of view, you don't have to accept my point of view. But we can accept the fact that there are multiple epistemological sources of knowledge. So my grandparents, for example, told me that. And you got this particular knowledge by studying it at University. So that means that we have plurality of knowledge, of knowledge systems. But we don't have to agree upon that. But if I trust you, if I know that you are smart, but you are coming from a very different background – and you have the same opinion about me, you don't want to convince me that I'm wrong, and I don't want to persuade you that you are wrong, we can basically come up to the same point, we can write the book where you say the sky is blue, and I say the sky is green and that would be wonderful.'* [Interview 14]





Mutual understanding between Indigenous peoples, scientists, and diplomats can also encourage mutual learning to address climate change in the Arctic. Arctic people, and especially Indigenous peoples, have been adapting to the harsh living conditions of the circumpolar Arctic for ages, possessing a 'unique experience of survival in difficult climate conditions'.<sup>57</sup> Indigenous peoples, thus, possess a unique knowledge, rooted in their ancestors' experiences of the Arctic environment, which can deeply inform and orient policies to protect human security in the Arctic and ensure that Arctic people are not displaced [Interview 11]. Simply put, there is so much that scientists and policy-makers can learn by listening to the Indigenous peoples' voices. Indigenous knowledge should be more integrated and communities engaged at every stage of research projects – scientists and governments tend to 'integrate Indigenous knowledge with other data out of context; not engaging Indigenous communities early on and throughout every stage of research projects [...] and not providing funding to ensure Indigenous peoples and communities have the same opportunities to engage and contribute to research projects'.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Indigenous peoples are open to learn from scientists, recognising 'the importance of collaboration between Indigenous knowledge holders and western trained scientists' to address climate change in the Arctic.<sup>59</sup> Simply put, 'co-production of knowledge (CPK)' should be encouraged to make sure that governments, scientists, and Indigenous peoples collaborate to address climate change through adaptation strategies and resilient solutions.<sup>60</sup>

## POLICY 6

### Improve Transnational Connections for Indigenous Peoples

Some interviewees mentioned that communication between Indigenous peoples is currently at risk and communities are increasingly siloed, partly due to the scarce infrastructures (poor internet connectivity was often highlighted), but also due to unnatural borders between communities [Interview 6, 8, 14]. Such borders often cut across Indigenous communities, such as the Inuits in Yukon (Canada) and Alaska, and the Sámi across the Scandinavian Arctic and Russia, who 'sometimes might have more connection with a group across the border than they would have with other Sámi groups within the same countries', because state borders didn't exist centuries ago [Interview 8]. In some areas of the circumpolar Arctic, such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland, it is easier to cross borders whereas in others, such as between Canada and the U.S, it is more difficult [Interview 6]. Arctic states, especially the United States and Canada, could work together to increase mobility for Indigenous peoples across state borders [Interview 6].<sup>61</sup> On the one hand, this could enhance human security for Indigenous peoples by ensuring that their rights are respected. On the other hand, governments are shielded against potential legal issues [Interview 6]. For example, in 2021, the Supreme Court of Canada granted to Richard Desautel, a U.S. citizen and member of the Lakes tribe of the Colville Confederated Tribes who shot an elk in British Columbia, the right to hunt on his ancestral Canadian lands after a very long trial.<sup>62</sup>

Communication between Indigenous peoples can also be improved through existing transboundary dialogues such as the Arctic Leaders' Summit (ALS). The summit, set up by the six Permanent Participants in 1991, creates unique opportunities for transnational collaboration. As stated in the latest ALS summary declaration:

57 Sergunin et al, 'Human Security in the Arctic', 2022, p.3; see also Greaves, 'Cities and human security', p. 70.

58 Carlo, 'Arctic Observing', pp. 9-10.

59 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

60 Carlo, 'Arctic Observing', 2020, p. 17.

61 It should be noted here that, at least in the short term, this policy recommendation applies to all Arctic states but Russia. Indeed, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Arctic countries tightened the VISA regime for all Russian citizens, including Indigenous peoples.

62 Amanda Coletta, 'Canada's Supreme Court Says Some Native Americans Can Hunt in British Columbia'. Washington Post. 23. April 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/04/23/canada-sinixit-supreme-court-british-columbia/> (accessed 3. August 2022)



*'There are many similarities in the visions of the six PP organizations, but paths may vary on how they see their visions implemented. They are united by the declarations, passion for youth involvement, and desire to protect their peoples, wildlife, lands, and waters. There are few Indigenous peoples in the circumpolar north, and as a result, they need those who believe in this vision to be supportive and invest in their vision.'*

Such a view is shared by the Arctic Indigenous Youth Leaders Summit, where Indigenous Youth Leaders recognise that 'though we are separated by language, cultures, and by borders, we are all facing the same issues.'<sup>63</sup>



Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat and UiT The Arctic University of Norway. 2019, *Ságastallamin – Telling the story of Arctic Indigenous Languages Exhibition*. Adapted from "Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, CAFF 2013 – Akureyri. Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. Status and Trends in Arctic biodiversity. – Linguistic Diversity (Chapter 20) page 656".

63 'Declaration of the First Arctic Youth Leaders' Summit'.

## D. Improve Institutional Dialogue in the Arctic

### **POLICY 7** Develop a Distinct Military Forum for Arctic Cooperation

The current pausing of the Arctic Council illustrates that growing inter-state competition can put human security at risk, now and in the future, as military security issues are increasingly prioritised over cooperation on climate change and environmental issues. In the long term, developing a military security forum distinct from the Council would potentially ensure that Arctic cooperation on human security is preserved and continued even in the face of increasing regional security competition.

Humans living in the Arctic are facing pressing risks due to climate change and cannot afford to be side victims of inter-state competition [Interview 6]. As one interviewee noticed, 'the Arctic Council does not address military issues, yet we find ourselves on pause because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine' [Interview 11; see also Interview 7]. Another interviewee reported: 'we can't just tell people living in the Arctic that they don't matter anymore because we don't agree at the government level' [Interview 13]. Simply put, it was raised that, while Russia's military actions must be firmly condemned, the pause of Arctic cooperation has detrimental effects for human security in the Arctic [Interviews 6, 7, 13]. With Sweden and Finland likely joining NATO in the near future,<sup>64</sup> the Arctic region could comprise seven NATO Member states representing approximately 50% of the Arctic territory, and Russia having the other 50%. As noted by some interviewees, this potential new format of one state 'against' the seven others could change security dynamics in the Arctic for the worst – 'we can't really afford having great power competition in the region' [Interview 1, see also 3, 7].<sup>65</sup> The actions that one side might take to enhance its military security – such as military exercises, sea patrols, and the development of new military technologies – could be perceived by the other side as attempts to endanger their own security, generating spiralling military competition. For example, usual NATO military exercises such as 'Cold Response'<sup>66</sup> could be perceived as threatening by Russia [Interview 3, 7]. Similarly, the A7 could perceive Russia's military developments in the Arctic as threatening [Interview 4].<sup>67</sup> Russia's submarine-based nuclear deterrence forces for second strike capability are based in the Kola Peninsula, and the country has recently developed 'missile-armed submarines and surface vessels, the world's largest icebreaker fleet and a new, dedicated Arctic Brigade' and created 'an integrated network of air defence, coastal missile systems, early warning radar and electronic warfare assets'.<sup>68</sup>

Simply put, strategic distrust and military modernisation are spiralling in the region, and Arctic states can no longer ignore hard security issues in light of the current geopolitical situation. As raised by many interviewees, in a not so distant future military security dynamics in the Arctic will be the perfect recipe for misperception and misunderstandings, if there is no security dialogue in place amongst Arctic states [Interviews 1, 4, 6, 7].

Therefore, some interviewees suggested to mitigate such risks by setting up, in the future, an Arctic military security dialogue, distinct and separate from the Arctic Council [Interview 1, 4, 7]. This could take the form of

64 'Finland and Sweden complete NATO accession talks', NATO, 4. July 2022. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_197737.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197737.htm) (accessed 29. July 2022)

65 This was also noted by Interviews 1, 2, 11, 13 of the Arctic 'Risky Resources' Project.

66 'Exercise Cold Response 2022 – NATO and partner forces face the freeze in Norway', NATO, 2. March 2022. [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_192351.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_192351.htm) (accessed 4. August 2022)

67 See also James Kenneth Wither, 'An Arctic security dilemma: assessing and mitigating the risk of unintended armed conflict in the High North', *European Security*, 30:4 (2021), pp. 649-666. doi:10.1080/09662839.2021.1942850

68 Wither, 'An Arctic Security Dilemma', 2021. p. 653.

existing or new regional security mechanisms, i.e. i) military hotlines between Arctic states [Interview 1]; ii) the Coastal Guard Forum [Interview 7]; or iii) resuming annual meetings of the Chiefs of the Armed Forces in the Arctic States [Interview 4]. This latter policy proposal is particularly interesting, as it was suggested by a non-Russian diplomat. Indeed, the Chiefs of the Armed Forces meetings were stopped after the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea, and, before February 2022, Russian diplomats had supported their resumption ‘to build trust and security in the region’, without success.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, there could be renewed interest on the part of both Russian diplomats and A7 Arctic diplomats to resume these talks, once the Ukraine war is over.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in the future Russia could be reintegrated in the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, a regional defence forum to which Russia has not participated since 2014 as a result of sanctions and suspension of military-to-military contacts.

Whatever the form that a future Arctic military forum might take, interviewees noticed that it would certainly be difficult for Arctic diplomats to set up a military dialogue in the short-term, given Russia’s invasion of Ukraine [Interview 1, 7].

## POLICY 8

### Unpausing the Arctic Council: Which Way Forward?

The pausing of the majority of the working groups of the Arctic Council for the past six months has led our interviewees to think about whether and when the Arctic Council should be unpaused. This current pause is currently putting at risk human security, mainly because the work on climate change and environmental cooperation is on hold. All our interviewees agreed that the Arctic Council is unique – there is no substitute for it when it comes to Arctic cooperation – and that the work of the Council must be restarted. However, they struggled to envisage how and when the Council could be resumed.

Some interviewees mentioned that, in the short term, the A7 and the Permanent Participants could restart cooperation without Russia [Interviews 6, 10].<sup>71</sup> In June 2022, the A7 implemented a ‘limited resumption of [their] work in the Arctic Council, in projects that do not involve the participation of the Russian Federation’.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, legally-binding agreements which were previously negotiated through the Arctic Council – such as oil spill response,<sup>73</sup> search and rescue, and scientific cooperation – are still in place.<sup>74</sup> However, the majority of the work and working groups of the Arctic Council – all those involving the Russian Federation – are still on pause.

However, in the long-term, cooperation within the Arctic Council without Russia is not considered sustainable [Interview 6, 10, 13, 15, 16]. The Russian territory represents 50% of the Arctic – excluding Russia

69 Peter B. Danilov, ‘Russia Wants to Resume Meetings Between Arctic Defense Chiefs’, High North News, 19. January 2021. <https://www.highnorthnews.com/en/russia-wants-resume-meetings-between-arctic-defense-chiefs> (accessed 2. August 2022)

70 Intriguingly, the Arctic Chiefs of Defence from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and the U.S. held a meeting in August 2022. See ‘Statement by the Chief of the Defence Staff on the Conclusion of the Arctic Chiefs of Defence Meeting’, Government of Canada, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/news/2022/08/statement-by-the-chief-of-the-defence-staff-on-the-conclusion-of-the-arctic-chiefs-of-defence-meeting.html>

71 This view is also shared by other Arctic experts, such as Timo Koivurova, a research professor of the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland, ‘The Arctic Council can continue without Russia’, Arctic Today, 10. March 2022. <https://www.arctictoday.com/the-arctic-council-can-continue-without-russia/> (accessed 4. August 2022)

72 ‘Joint Statement on Limited Resumption of Arctic Council Cooperation’. US Department of State, 8. June 2022. <https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-limited-resumption-of-arctic-council-cooperation/> (accessed 23. July 2022)

73 Yereth Rosen, ‘Despite Ukraine war, US and Russia continue emergency cooperation in the Bering Strait’, Arctic Today, 11. April 2022. <https://www.arctictoday.com/despite-ukraine-war-us-and-russia-continue-emergency-cooperation-in-the-bering-strait/> (accessed 4. August 2022)

74 Cornell Overfield, ‘Suspending participation in the Arctic Council is tragic, but right’, Arctic Today, 8. April 2022. <https://www.arctictoday.com/suspending-participation-in-the-arctic-council-is-tragic-but-right/> (accessed 3. August 2022)

would mean significantly limiting the work of the Arctic Council. As one interviewee put it: 'For the good of all of us [...] We need to work with them. We have to find a way to do that. It is as simple as that.' [Interview 13]. Moreover, all Arctic states (including Russia), despite their differences, share a common interest in maintaining cooperative relations within the Arctic Council to ensure socio-economic development in the region [Interview 8, 15]. As one interviewee argued, the A7 joint statement on Arctic Council cooperation after Russia's invasion of Ukraine underscores a responsibility to all Arctic people to continue circumpolar cooperation [Interview 10]. The statement states:

*'We remain convinced of the enduring value of the Arctic Council for circumpolar cooperation and reiterate our support for this institution and its work. We hold a responsibility to the people of the Arctic, including the indigenous peoples, who contribute to and benefit from the important work undertaken in the Council'.<sup>75</sup>*

Especially in light of this statement, Arctic states should find ways to urgently restart Arctic cooperation.

Amongst those interviewed who thought that Russia should be allowed back in the future, it was noted that this could not happen until the war in Ukraine is ended [Interviews 6, 10, 13, 15]. As one interviewee put it, at the moment 'emotions are still strong [...] and are taking over on rationality', and 'we need time on both sides [Russia and the A7] to set aside emotions and return to pragmatic cooperation' [Interview 15]. Another interviewee suggested that the Ukraine war could be a starting point for resuming dialogue with Russia: Arctic diplomats could offer Russia to restart the work of the Arctic Council provided that the Ukraine war ends [Interview 6].

Surely, if the Arctic Council has to be restarted, security issues should be left behind. The A7 will have to find a way to resume work with Russia on human security, climate change, resilience and adaptation strategies [Interviews 6, 10, 13], and security issues should be left outside of the Council and discussed in a distinct military security forum (see Policy 7). The Arctic Council should go back to its essence as a platform for scientific exchange and diplomatic cooperation on environmental issues to combat climate change and improve sustainability [Interviews 7, 8, 13, 15, 16].

<sup>75</sup> 'Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine'.



# Conclusions

This report sets out important policy recommendations to address current and future risks to human security in the Arctic. The report shows that such risks are complex and interconnected, and that human security is and will continue to be negatively affected by climate change and shifting power dynamics in the region. Climate change impacts infrastructures, available food supplies, business practices, and Indigenous People's traditional ways of life. Shifting power dynamics and inter-state competition impact the endurance of cooperation on environmental issues and climate change. In this situation, Arctic states should re-prioritise Arctic people, bearing a responsibility to ensure that the Arctic is a secure place for all human beings to live in.

A crucial finding of this report is that there is a pressing need for more dialogue in the Arctic, both amongst Arctic states and with local and Indigenous peoples. As illustrated by the current pause of the Arctic Council, dialogue is often the first casualty of inter-state competition, but also its most powerful remedy. Indeed, it is only through dialogue that Arctic states, in consultation with the Permanent Participants, can find ways to restart Arctic cooperation and make sure that such cooperation is not endangered by future military security issues. Moreover, dialogue between Arctic diplomats and local and Indigenous peoples could identify priorities and mutual benefits for policies and investments in relation to infrastructures and in the extractive industry and renewable energy sectors. Finally, third-party facilitated dialogues could encourage mutual understanding between Indigenous peoples and Arctic central governments to overcome policy hurdles and cooperate in the spirit of reaching the common goal of improving human security in the region. It is only through dialogue that Arctic states can gradually build trust amongst themselves and with local and Indigenous people, and restore cooperation to enhance mutual security.

BASIC remains committed to promoting meaningful dialogue to advance global security in order to build trust and reduce risks in international politics. It is hoped that this report is a first step towards advancing this type of dialogue in the Arctic.

## APPENDIX A

# Sample of Interview Questions

### 1. Clairvoyant.

If you could spend some time with someone who knew the future of human security in the Arctic, including the Archipelago and the North-West Passage, a clairvoyant or oracle if such existed, what would you want to know?

### 2. An optimistic outcome (optimistic but realistic).

If things went well, being optimistic and realistic, what would be a desirable outcome for human security in the Arctic?

### 3. A pessimistic outcome.

If things went wrong, being pessimistic, what would you be most worried about? How could increased state competition and climate change deteriorate to further threaten human security in the Arctic?

### 4. The internal situation.

What needs to change (institutionally, legally, culturally for example) for the optimistic, but realistic outcome to be realised? (i.e. what needs to change for the desirable outcome to happen?)

### 5. Looking back on the past 10/20 years.

Looking back, what would you identify as the significant events or forces which have produced the current situation?

### 6. Looking forward.

What decisions need to be made in the near term to create the conditions for the desired long-term outcome?

### 7. The Epitaph.

If you had a mandate, free of all constraints, what more would you do to ensure a successful future for human security in the Arctic?

BASIC promotes meaningful dialogue amongst governments and experts in order to build international trust, reduce nuclear risks, and advance disarmament.

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