



ISRM

THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC
RISK MANAGEMENT

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CENTRE FOR THE STUDY
OF WICKED PROBLEMS

GLOBAL RISK REVIEW

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CONTENTS

A Message from Dr David Rubens	4
Overview	5
Introduction	7
Executive Summary	8
Geopolitical and Security Flashpoints	9
Global Strategic Awareness	10
Global Economic Shifts and Geopolitical Dynamics: Trade, Influence and Emerging Risks	10
Evidence, Inaction and Escalating Risks in Global Conflict	11
Gaza Deadlock, Polish Terror-for-Hire and Nuclear Risks	11
Gaza Humanitarian Toll, Diplomatic Frictions and Uneven Global Responses	12
Gaza Narratives and U.S. Diplomacy	12
Beyond Gaza: Rising Strains from Diplomacy, Weather and Infrastructure	13
Serbia's Student Protests: Decentralised Mobilisation and the Road to Political Change	13
Indonesia Enters Period of Heightened Political Risk Amid Widespread Protests	14
Australia Expels Iranian Ambassador Following Alleged Links to Anti-Jewish Attacks	14
Australia's Maritime Capabilities, Climate Challenges and Plastic Pollution Spotlited	15
Climate and Environmental Risk	16
Accelerating Climate Change and the Challenge of Global Resilience	17
Extreme Heatwaves Pose Rising Risk to Cities Worldwide	17
Global Heatwaves and Climate Impact on Agriculture	18
Systemic Risks from Food Costs and Global Tensions	18
Climate Risks, Strategic Trade Tensions and Shifting Global Alignments	19
Converging Climate Pressures in the UK	19
Serbia's Wildfires Expose Systemic Gaps in Disaster Preparedness	20
Resource Governance and Environmental Risks in Serbia's Mining Strategy	20
Canada Balances Climate Pressures and Strategic Defence Expansion	21
Heatwaves Reveal Governance Failures and Energy Fragility in Egypt	21
Understanding Escalatory Hazards and the Challenges of Policy Response	22
Seismic Risk and Water Resilience Challenges	22
Risk Modelling and Strategic Foresight	23
Risk Modelling and Its Limits in Real: World Crisis Response	24
Preparing for the Inevitable: Simplifying Risk Modelling to Protect People Over Profits	24
Actuarial Risk Models Under Pressure from Unprecedented Global Events	25
Preparing for Catastrophic Risk: Corporate Accountability and Lessons from History	25
Scenario Planning Reveals Risks Missed by Traditional Forecasts	26
Global Risk Modelling Reveals Promise and Limits of Predictive Tools	26

AI in Risk Modelling: Promise, Pitfalls and the Threat of Knowledge Reduction	27
Beyond Black Swans: The Importance of Weak Signals and Diverse Thinking in Risk Modelling	27
Breaking Silos: The Challenges and Imperatives of Multi-Hazard Risk Modelling	28
The Complex Realities of Risk Modelling, Partnerships and Public Communication	28
Risk Modelling and the Moral Imperative of Action	29
Leadership and Emotional Intelligence in Risk Governance	29
Case Study: Risk Modelling in the Balkans: Linking Prediction to Action	30
Governance, Resilience and Moral Imperatives	31
Contradictions in Global Governance: Public Health, Industry and Strategic Security	32
Bridging Technology, Environment and Security Amid Rising Global Pressures	32
Corporate Risk Management in an Ever-Evolving World	33
Crisis Leadership Under Pressure: Corporate Responsibility and Decision-Making in Extreme Events	33
Risk Management and Accountability: Bridging Strategy and Frontline Realities	34
Embedding Ground-Level Realities into Crisis Decision-Making	34
Building Resilience Through Ethical Decision-Making	35
Reframing Global Crisis Dialogue: Building an Engaged Community of Practice	35
Beyond Infrastructure: Embedding Civilian Survivability in Risk Governance	36
Interpreting Data, Public Preparedness and the Limits of Information Sharing	36
Beyond Recovery: Rethinking Artificial Intelligence, Risk and Resilience	37
Closing the Gaps in Crisis Response	37
Lessons from Crisis Leadership	38
Economic and Strategic Shifts	39
Sanctions and the Return of Old Patterns in Global Power Politics	40
Sanctions and the Limits of Economic Pressure in Ukraine	40
Corruption and Infrastructure Gaps Weaken Global Disaster Preparedness	41
Hidden Networks of Influence and the Strategic Use of Organised Crime	41
Political Vacuums, Militia Violence and Climate Strain Deepen Global Instability	42
Africa's Evolving Partnerships: Trade, Security and Geopolitical Realignment	42
Information Warfare and Digital Polarisation	43
Rising Polarisation and the Changing Nature of Online Discourse	44
Echo Chambers, Algorithms and the Decline of Open Debate	44
Algorithms, Information Warfare and Institutional Fragility: Trust under Strain	45
AI Model Limitations and Governance Gaps in Climate and Infrastructure Policy	46
Emotional Intelligence vs. Artificial Intelligence: The Future of Social Skills in Learning	46
The promises and perils of Artificial Intelligence	47
Concluding Remarks	48

A MESSAGE FROM DR DAVID RUBENS

This September edition of the ISRM Global Risk Review arrives a couple of weeks behind schedule. The reason is simple - and one many of you will recognise. Like so many organisations, we are working with a small but highly committed team that is constantly asked to do more, across more time zones, with fewer resources than we'd like.

We have a senior management team of myself and Mike White in London and a HQ support team that is a typical post-Covid globally spread, virtually connected network. Marija Popadic, our Programmes and Partnerships Manager, is in Belgrade; Kleoniki Theodoridou, who is our Editorial Manager and is responsible for putting together this report, is in Athens; Majkl Velner, who is our Design and IT Manager, is in Slovakia; Farah Benis, our Comms Director is between Spain and London; Jen De Leon, our Admin Manager, is in Dubai and our two interns Christabel Janice and Theodora Posta are in Jakarta and Berlin respectively.

This is a team spread across continents, working virtually but united by a shared vision, a sense of mission and a deep trust in one another. Of course, that doesn't stop us, like many of you, from sometimes feeling like we are spinning too many plates at once. (Or, as someone memorably said to me at a conference in Sydney: "I don't have ducks. I have one hundred squirrels - and they're all drunk.")

This month's edition reflects that complexity. Where does one even begin? With the strengthening ties between China, India and Russia, symbolised by the striking image of Xi Jinping, Narendra Modi and Vladimir Putin holding hands? With escalating Russian military provocations in European airspace that have already triggered NATO Article 4 consultations? With the continuing cascade of climate shocks - from super typhoons to 8.8 magnitude earthquakes - reshaping the global environment?

With the relentless surge of cyber-attacks undermining governments, corporations and critical infrastructures? Or with the toxic polarisation of political discourse, particularly in the United States, where opponents are no longer seen as holding alternative views but as enemies to be defeated?

The truth, of course, is that it is all of the above - and more. We no longer live in a world where issues can be triaged neatly. Everything is system-critical and everything is interconnected.

We are not claiming that ISRM has the solutions to these challenges. What we do offer is a platform for structured analysis, meaningful discussion and a global community committed to grappling with the problems in ways that add to collective knowledge and resilience. That sense of shared endeavour, of not being alone in the face of complex, inchoate threats, is perhaps our greatest strength.

As always, thank you for being part of this community. I hope this report sparks new insights, strengthens your resolve and reminds you that, wherever you are in the world, your work contributes to something larger than yourself.

David Rubens

Executive Director, ISRM

1st October, 2025



OVERVIEW

The Global Crisis Watch episodes over August reflect a world grappling with intensifying geopolitical tensions, climate-driven disasters, institutional fragility and the evolving role of risk modelling and artificial intelligence. This Global Risk Review report underscores the urgent need for adaptive governance, strategic foresight and inclusive resilience planning.

KEY THEMES INCLUDED:

ESCALATING GEOPOLITICAL CRISES

Ukraine & Gaza Conflicts

Escalating military actions, including targeted strikes on civilian and diplomatic sites, raise concerns over humanitarian law violations and deliberate escalation strategies.

Indonesia and Serbia Unrest

Widespread protests driven by austerity, corruption and governance failures signal rising civic mobilisation and political volatility.

Iranian Influence Operations

Alleged state-sponsored criminal activity in Australia and Canada highlights the growing use of covert networks to exert geopolitical influence.

China–Russia–North Korea Axis

Joint appearances at military parades suggest deepening strategic alignment aimed at counterbalancing U.S. influence.

Latin America

U.S. bounty on Venezuelan president; Venezuela cited as a cautionary case for corruption and violence in resource sectors.

Middle East Maritime Security

Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping lanes disrupt trade.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Intensifying Disasters

Europe's unprecedented wildfires and severe flooding in the U.S. highlight escalating climate-driven disruptions.

Agricultural and Food Security Threats

Heatwaves and droughts reducing crop yields across Ukraine, India, China, Pakistan, Sub-Saharan Africa and North America; compounded by land-use conflicts.

Environmental Governance Failures

Brazil's bill rolling back Amazon protections threatens global carbon absorption; Serbia's mining strategy risks environmental harm due to weak transparency and oversight.

Emerging Health Impacts

Climate change worsening allergies, respiratory conditions and spreading disease vectors.

EVOLVING SECURITY THREATS

Terrorism and Domestic Instability

Haiti's criminal control and planned Gaza-related protests in the UK signal unconventional and hybrid security threats.

Infrastructure and Energy Risks

UK's Sizewell C nuclear project facing engineering challenges; Heathrow's expansion plans questioned over feasibility and cost. Water security flagged as a critical vulnerability for future conflict.

Cybersecurity

Concerns over China's cyber penetration of Western systems.

TECHNOLOGY, SPACE AND AI RISKS

Space Governance

NASA's plan to deploy a nuclear reactor on the Moon by 2030 raises questions about territorial claims and militarisation.

AI and Data Centres

High carbon footprint of AI systems; 'model collapse' risks, where AI trains on AI outputs eroding innovation and reliability; sustainability trade-offs between digital infrastructure and environmental costs.

Innovation opposed to Security

Debate over balancing technological investment with national security priorities.

CORPORATE AND ORGANISATIONAL RISK MANAGEMENT

'New Normal' of Crises

Companies now face persistent, overlapping disruptions rather than isolated incidents, requiring continuous rather than episodic crisis management.

Reputational Risk and Social Media

Digital platforms amplify crises and misinformation, making timely, credible messaging essential.

Leadership and Accountability Gaps

Multiple case studies (Tylenol, Grenfell, Manchester Arena, Deepwater Horizon) illustrate failures in bridging strategic decision-making and operational realities.

Ethical Decision-Making

Reports emphasise moral courage and principled leadership under uncertainty, warning against punishing 'false alarms' that could otherwise save lives.

STRUCTURAL AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

Contradictions in Global Policy

Western countries simultaneously viewing China as a strategic threat while deepening trade and academic ties; failure of international declarations to translate into meaningful outcomes.

Resource Inequities

Rising food prices with minimal benefit to farmers, underinvestment in water and energy infrastructure and inequitable supply chains.

Need for Transparency

Weak oversight in resource governance and restricted access to conflict zones hinder informed action.

Institutional Fragility

Leadership failures, siloed information sharing and politicised risk assessments slows down crisis response.

Civilian Survivability

Calls to embed human-centred resilience into planning frameworks, moving beyond infrastructure-focused models.

Ethics in Risk Governance

Evacuation efforts and disaster response highlight the moral dimension of decision-making.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Switching Crisis Management Tactics

An essential shift from reactive crisis response to continuous risk management with embedded resilience could bring a big difference in effective crisis and emergency management.

Crisis Management Strategies

Build bridges between high-level strategy and ground-level realities to avoid operational blind spots.
Treat climate adaptation as urgent, systemic and multi-sectoral, not incremental.
Strengthen cross-sector collaboration (government, business, tech, health and civil society).
Develop a culture that supports decisive action under uncertainty and rewards preparedness over complacency.

Promise and Pitfalls of Predictive Tools

While risk modelling aids decision-making, overcomplication, bias, and siloed thinking undermine its effectiveness.

Artificial Intelligence Integration

Artificial intelligence offers efficiency but risks "model collapse", bias amplification and erosion of human judgment.

Scenario Planning and Weak Signals

Emphasis on alternative foresight methods to uncover tail risks and anticipate systemic shocks.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE:

The Global Risk Review Reports aim to provide timely, structured and critical analyses of key geopolitical, economic and humanitarian developments worldwide. Based on the Chatham House rules of informed, policy-relevant insight, these reports are designed to support decision-makers, analysts and stakeholders in anticipating risk, understanding systemic shifts and preparing for strategic response. Each edition synthesises complex global events, identifies trends and highlights potential flashpoints that may reshape the international landscape.

METHODOLOGY:

These Global Crisis Watch reviews are the product of weekly sessions that examine the most pressing and current geopolitical, economic and humanitarian developments worldwide. Through open dialogue and the active participation of experts, strategic analysts and professionals from the field of Strategic Risk Management and beyond, the series provides a unique platform for authentic exchange - fostering insight, collaboration and contribution to the broader pursuit of informed and effective global risk governance.

The sessions are recorded in full with consent and serve as the primary data source. The editorial team conducts thematic coding and qualitative analysis of the transcripts, synthesising recurrent trends and emergent insights across weeks. Transcripts are systematically coded into key thematic categories (geopolitical risk, humanitarian crises, governance, technology, economic trends, social resilience, etc.). Direct contributions from participants are integrated where appropriate, ensuring fidelity to the authentic forum dialogue.

THEMATIC APPROACH:

Global Crisis Watch reports are organised thematically to reflect the complex and interconnected nature of global risks. Rather than following a purely geographic or event-based structure, each report distils key themes emerging from expert dialogue - allowing for a more strategic and systemic understanding of today's evolving risk environment.

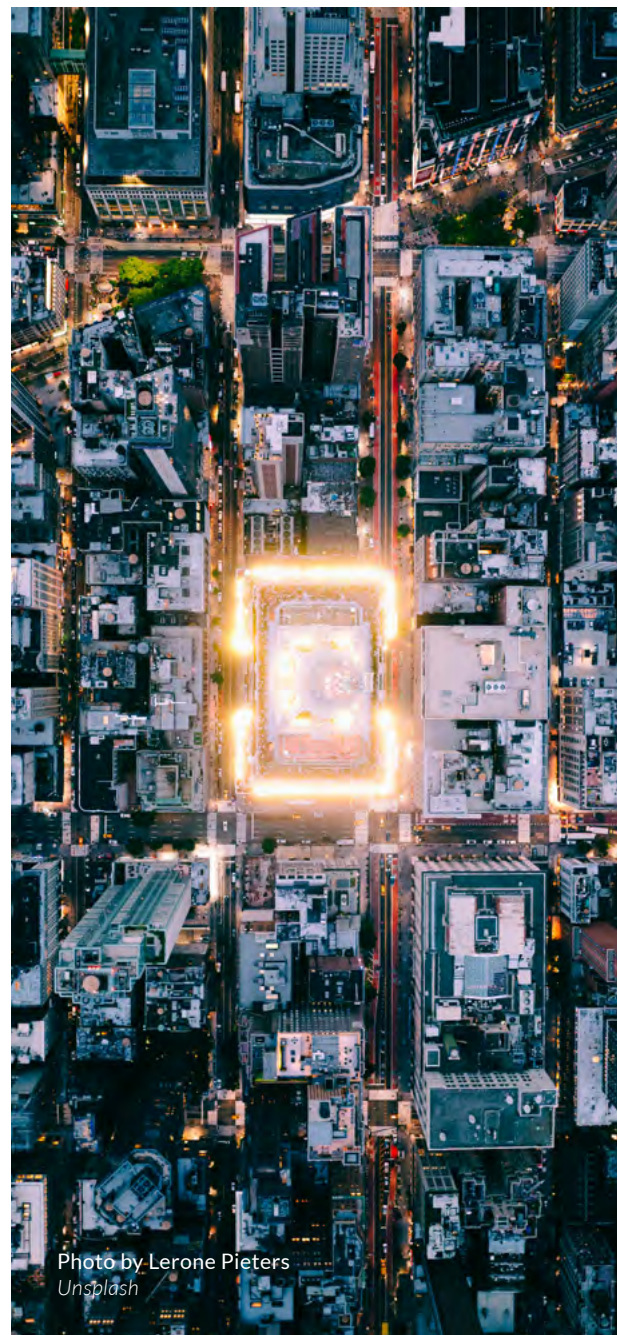


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The August session of Global Crisis Watch convened at a moment of intensifying global instability and converging pressures. The humanitarian emergency in Gaza dominated discussions. Severe restrictions on humanitarian access, widespread famine and growing allegations of crimes against humanity underscored the scale of the crisis. At the same time, diplomatic momentum towards recognition of Palestinian statehood is building among key actors, even as Israel rejects conditions tied to such recognition.

Regional instability across Asia further highlighted the extent of today's security challenges. Renewed tensions on the Cambodia–Thailand border, deepening displacement of Rohingya populations into Bangladesh and the fragility of India–Pakistan relations underscored enduring risks between nuclear powers. Russian escalation in Ukraine, Israeli strikes on Iranian targets and North Korean provocations were served as evidence of a 'new normal' in global security where extraordinary events are becoming routine.

Climate change emerged as a parallel driver of disruption. Record-breaking wildfires in Southern Europe - including the largest in France in seventy-five years - mirror escalating disasters in North America, straining emergency response systems and reshaping societies. In South America, a controversial Brazilian bill threatening indigenous rights and accelerating Amazon deforestation raised alarm over biodiversity loss and reduced CO₂ absorption.

It was also noted that corporations and institutions are now recalibrating their understanding of crisis to account for persistent, overlapping disruptions. Continuous risk management, operational resilience and strategic agility were identified as critical pillars of governance and corporate strategy in an era of sustained volatility.

A core theme of the session was the role and limits of risk modelling in an environment defined by systemic uncertainty. Structured frameworks can anticipate cascading consequences, allocate resources and strengthen preparedness, yet challenges persist. Questions about data sufficiency, bias in assumptions and the risk of overcomplication remain, even as scenario analysis, stress testing, Delphi methods and AI-driven tools offer potential for greater adaptability and accuracy.

In summary, this Global Risk Review serves as a unique platform where practitioners, policymakers and academics can engage in thought-provoking conversations about interconnected risks. By fostering community-driven dialogue, the forum aims to build collective capacity to mitigate the impacts of crises that are no longer exceptional but entrenched features of the global landscape.

GEOPOLITICAL AND SECURITY FLASHPOINTS

GLOBAL STRATEGIC AWARENESS

Recent discussions highlighted the evolving global landscape in which organised crime, state influence and geopolitical manoeuvring intersect. Canada's role in critical and rare earth mineral production underscores its growing strategic importance, while broader concerns around international influence - particularly from China - point to the emergence of deeply embedded, transnational actors shaping narratives and policy.

Moreover, it was emphasised the need for engagement beyond familiar perspectives, advocating for dialogue across ideological and national boundaries to understand complex global dynamics. The discussion noted gaps in global institutional responses, including limitations of the UN and omissions in key reports, highlighting the necessity for democracies to develop pragmatic and coordinated measures to address systemic challenges.

The session reinforced the significance of non-kinetic threats - cyber operations, infrastructure vulnerabilities and covert influence - demonstrating that organised crime and state-backed actors operate across multiple domains. It is also essential to note that ongoing observations and proactive engagement remain critical for law enforcement, regulatory bodies and policymakers to anticipate and mitigate emerging risks worldwide.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC SHIFTS AND GEOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS: TRADE, INFLUENCE AND EMERGING RISKS

The session highlighted the interconnectedness of global economic trends, geopolitical manoeuvring and regional influence. Observations from Jakarta highlighted the vibrancy of Indonesia's economy and the broader ASEAN region, noting how global tariffs, sanctions and supply chain shifts are driving alternative trade pathways beyond traditional dollar-based systems.

The discussion also addressed international affair topics related to the U.S.-India trade tensions, Russian energy exports and the broader implications of Chinese investment in infrastructure and labour markets across Africa and Asia. This tactic reflects a strategic recalibration of influence. Apart from the geopolitical perspective, climate change played a key role during the session as an accelerating geopolitical risk with far-reaching economic and security impacts.

In conclusion, participants also explored the consequences of external political actors shaping conflict dynamics, including the role of the United States in mediating or exacerbating tensions in Ukraine and the Middle East. The session ended with an emphasis on the importance of sustained dialogue, knowledge sharing and collaborative risk assessment across all parties.

EVIDENCE, INACTION AND ESCALATING RISKS IN GLOBAL CONFLICT

The discussion underscored the critical distinction between evidence and proof in the assessment of global risks. While definitive proof is often elusive, patterns of evidence can be sufficiently strong to warrant preventive action, particularly in volatile contexts, where waiting for incontrovertible proof risks catastrophic consequences.

This concern resonates across multiple arenas, from Venezuela's governance crisis to the ongoing war in Ukraine. In both cases, the greater issue lies not in the absence of warning signs but in the systemic failure to act upon them. The tendency of governments and institutions to delay decisions until certainty is achieved has repeatedly undermined resilience and increased the cost of response.

The central challenge is therefore less about identifying risks - whether in conflict, governance or environmental crises - and **more about why action is not taken when evidence already points to escalating danger**. Addressing this inertia is essential to strengthening global security and avoiding preventable crises.



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GAZA DEADLOCK, POLISH TERROR-FOR-HIRE AND NUCLEAR RISKS

The discussion highlighted growing uncertainty surrounding Israel's campaign in Gaza. Questions persist over the mission's objectives - whether focused on recovering hostages, eliminating Hamas or territorial control - as the humanitarian toll continues to mount and public clarity diminishes. The conflict, now approaching two years since the October 2023 attacks, has yet to deliver decisive outcomes despite Israel's military dominance, raising doubts about the viability of its current approach.

Attention also turned to domestic security in Europe with Poland announcing the arrest of over twenty suspects linked to planned terrorist activities. The development highlighted the emergence of 'terror-for-hire,' where individuals from diverse origins - including Bulgaria, Ukraine and beyond - were allegedly contracted to conduct attacks. This trend raises difficult questions about the shifting nature of terrorism, blurring lines between ideological, commercial and state-sponsored violence.

The session also addressed infrastructure risks, notably within the UK nuclear sector. The Sizewell C project was reported to face significant engineering challenges, including unstable ground conditions that require freezing of the site for excavation. The unconventional solution draws attention to the technical and financial risks associated with large-scale energy projects, particularly in the context of accelerating climate change.

Together, these issues point to a complex landscape in which protracted conflicts, evolving security threats and infrastructure vulnerabilities converge, demanding adaptive strategies from policymakers and risk managers alike.

GAZA HUMANITARIAN TOLL, DIPLOMATIC FRICTIONS AND UNEVEN GLOBAL RESPONSES

The session emphasised the intensifying humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where daily civilian casualties risk becoming normalised in public discourse. Comparisons were drawn to past conflicts, from Biafra to the Balkans, underscoring the sense that deliberate famine and mass suffering are being used as instruments of war.

Diplomatic tensions were noted, particularly between Israel and governments in Europe with Ireland cited as experiencing a strained relationship following its early advocacy for a two-state solution alongside Spain and Norway. U.S. positions remain divided with some officials pressing Israel while others remain firmly aligned with its government.

Discussions also highlighted the uneven international response, pointing to muted reactions from parts of the Muslim world despite its economic influence and leverage. This discrepancy, contrasted with strong reactions in the West due to historical, cultural and social ties with Israel, emphasizes the complex dynamics shaping global engagement with the conflict.



Photo by Mohammed Ibrahim
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GAZA NARRATIVES AND U.S. DIPLOMACY

The visit of U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff to Gaza was discussed against the backdrop of Israel’s ban on independent journalists, raising concerns that reporting from the ground will be tightly controlled and highly sanitised. Both the Israel Defence Forces and U.S. representatives are expected to shape the narrative through their own media coverage, shielded by diplomatic protections.

Attention also turned to President Trump’s varied responses to recent international endorsements of a two-state solution. While the UK’s position was met with mild approval, France’s was dismissed as insignificant and Canada’s drew a hostile reaction, illustrating inconsistent diplomatic messaging toward different allies advancing similar positions.



Photo by Khalid Kwaik
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BEYOND GAZA: RISING STRAINS FROM DIPLOMACY, WEATHER AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Discussion highlighted uncertainty over the upcoming visit of U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff to Gaza with doubts about whether conditions on the ground - particularly violence at aid distribution sites - would be accurately conveyed.

On the diplomatic front, Canada announced plans to recognise a Palestinian state in September, aligning with the UK and France under similar conditions. This prompted a sharp response from the United States with President Trump warning of potential consequences for bilateral trade negotiations. The episode raises broader questions about whether U.S. tactics in such instances constitute strategic negotiation or coercion.

Attention also turned to escalating climate-related disruptions. Southern Europe continues to battle severe wildfires, while the eastern United States has been hit by extreme flooding with some 50 million people under emergency alerts and critical transport hubs - including New York's airports - significantly impacted. Uncertainty remains over whether the rise in such events reflects a genuine increase in frequency and severity or improved global reporting or both.

Finally, UK infrastructure developments were noted, particularly around Heathrow Airport. Proposals for a new third runway and large-scale modernisation plans estimated at £49 billion have been announced. However, given the historic pattern of significant overruns in projects of this scale, scepticism remains regarding feasibility and costs.

The session underscored that while Gaza and Ukraine dominate global headlines, a range of underlying issues - from trade disputes to infrastructure resilience and climate shocks - demand close attention from strategists, policymakers and risk managers alike.

SERBIA'S STUDENT PROTESTS: DECENTRALISED MOBILISATION AND THE ROAD TO POLITICAL CHANGE

Recent developments in Serbia highlight a significant wave of political activism following the Novi Sad canopy tragedy, where sixteen lives were lost. What began as student-led protests has evolved into a nationwide movement challenging the entrenched regime, rooted in years of what analysts describe as a 'mafia state.'

The protests remain highly decentralised with minimal ideology and no central leadership. Young people, historically politically disengaged are increasingly stepping into public spaces to demand snap elections, reflecting a shift in civic engagement and political awareness.

Observers note growing repression by the government, while European representatives have expressed support for the movement's values but stressed respect for Serbia's sovereignty and the right of its citizens to choose their government.

While the protests have already reshaped public discourse, systemic political change is expected to be gradual. Snap elections, if held, may face irregularities, suggesting that while the movement has energised civic participation, enduring transformation will require sustained effort over time.

INDONESIA ENTERS PERIOD OF HEIGHTENED POLITICAL RISK AMID WIDESPREAD PROTESTS

Indonesia is facing a rapid escalation of political unrest only ten months into the current presidency, marking one of the most significant challenges of the administration to date. Large-scale protests have erupted across major cities in Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi and eastern Indonesia, driven primarily by budgetary disputes. Reductions in the dispersal of national funds to provincial administrations have led to spending cuts, sparking widespread dissatisfaction and mobilising civil society on a scale unprecedented in the early phase of this presidency.

Public anger has been further aggravated by sharp increases in salaries and housing allowances for members of parliament - reportedly as high as USD 3,000 - seen as deeply out of step with austerity measures. The result has been a wave of demonstrations in Jakarta, where the city has been placed on Amber alert. Protests around parliamentary and police headquarters intensified following the death of a motorcyclist fatally struck by a police mobile brigade vehicle, an incident that has galvanised public outrage and brought thousands, including student groups and motorcycle taxi drivers, onto the streets.

The broader political backdrop is equally significant. The current administration, led by a former military general and son-in-law of the late President Suharto, has expanded the cabinet substantially and placed military figures into numerous civilian leadership positions. This shift reflects a deepening securitisation of governance with growing implications for Indonesia's political trajectory.

With students arriving equipped for extended demonstrations and key sectors of civil society mobilising, the unrest shows little sign of abating. Protracted protest, dissent and civil disobedience appear increasingly likely, underscoring both the volatility of Indonesia's political environment and the fragility of public confidence in governance.

AUSTRALIA EXPELS IRANIAN AMBASSADOR FOLLOWING ALLEGED LINKS TO ANTI-JEWISH ATTACKS

Australia has taken the rare step of declaring the Iranian ambassador persona non grata, marking the first such expulsion in decades. The decision follows allegations that Iranian operatives conspired with local criminals to carry out attacks on Jewish community sites, including a firebombing of the historic Adass Synagogue in Melbourne. The incident resulted in severe damage to sacred Torah scrolls and endangered lives with worshippers narrowly escaping harm.

Investigations into the perpetrators - two young and inexperienced offenders - traced a financial trail back to Iranian sources, prompting the government to act decisively. The move demonstrates both the seriousness of foreign interference on Australian soil and the government's willingness to respond forcefully to acts targeting religious communities.

Historically, Australia has rarely expelled ambassadors with the last comparable instance occurring in relation to Japan during the Second World War. The decision therefore carries significant diplomatic weight and may herald further measures, if similar activities are uncovered.

The episode has heightened awareness of external influence operations within Australia and emphasised the vulnerabilities of religious and cultural institutions. It also reinforces the growing intersection of domestic security, foreign policy and community resilience in the face of transnational threats.

AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME CAPABILITIES, CLIMATE CHALLENGES AND PLASTIC POLLUTION SPOTLIGHTED

The discussion highlighted key issues in Australia's maritime security, climate policy and environmental management. The absence of a dedicated coast guard limits effective search and rescue operations across vast maritime areas, complicating responses to emergencies in the Great Southern and Indian Oceans. This limitation raises questions about the practicality and public perception of investing heavily in naval assets, including nuclear submarines and new frigates.

In parallel, the climate debate focused on the inevitability of ongoing change due to systemic inertia, emphasising mitigation efforts over attempts to halt climate change entirely. Concerns were raised about human-driven environmental impacts, particularly the role of petrochemicals in plastic waste, microplastics contamination in humans and marine ecosystems, as well as the contribution of consumer industries beyond fossil fuel production.

On a final note, during the session, environmental diplomacy successes were addressed, including the removal of tariffs on Heard Island penguins, highlighting the intersection of conservation initiatives and international policy. The session underscored the need for strategic planning in maritime security, proactive climate mitigation and coordinated approaches to global environmental challenges.

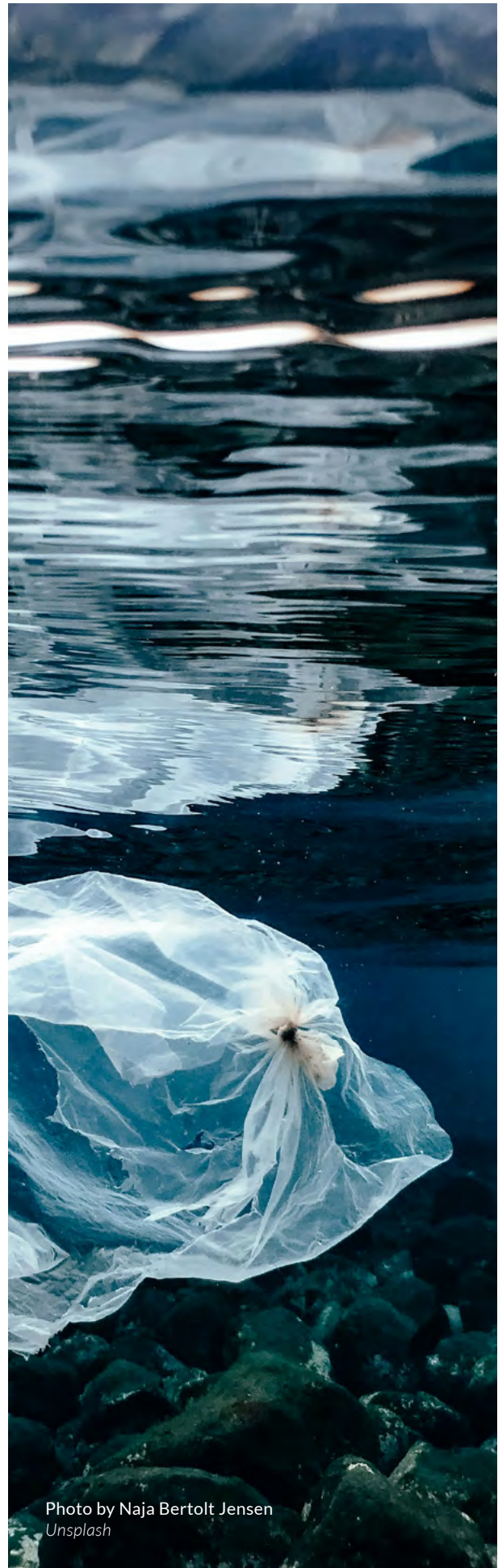


Photo by Naja Bertolt Jensen
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ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL RESILIENCE

The discussion highlighted the accelerating pace of climate change and its profound implications for food security, community resilience and global sustainability. Rapid environmental shifts are already affecting agricultural planning, leaving farmers uncertain about what crops to plant due to unpredictable weather patterns. The limitations of political processes in addressing these challenges were underscored with renewables and technological solutions proving insufficient to counter the scale of systemic change.

The conversation also addressed societal consumption patterns, the expansion of the global middle class and lastly, the ecological limits of the planet, suggesting that current population levels far exceed sustainable thresholds. The ethical and moral dilemmas of global survival under such constraints were raised, emphasising the tension between practical resilience strategies and humanitarian considerations. Overall, the session stressed the urgent need for both local and community-level preparedness while acknowledging the broader, almost intractable challenges posed by planetary-scale environmental change.



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Photo by Annie Spratt
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EXTREME HEATWAVES POSE RISING RISK TO CITIES WORLDWIDE

The discussion highlighted the looming threat of extreme heatwaves, particularly those reaching wet-bulb temperatures of 30-35°C - levels at which human and animal survival becomes impossible. Such events are no longer hypothetical; climate models, once deemed pessimistic, now indicate rising probabilities of these deadly heatwaves across regions including the Ganges basin, parts of China, the southern United States and the Gulf.

The convergence of extreme heat and infrastructure fragility presents a compounded risk. Power grids are likely to collapse under surging air conditioning demand, exacerbating mortality rates. Despite the predictability of these events, governments and policymakers remain reluctant to communicate the scale of the threat, often fearing public panic. Yet, the argument was made that informed alarm, rather than suppression of truth, may be necessary for effective preparedness.

On the mitigation front, the session revealed a persistent misperception of government response capacity. In large-scale catastrophes, rescue and relief are unlikely to arrive immediately, reinforcing the need for communities and individuals to develop realistic expectations and resilience strategies.

GLOBAL HEATWAVES AND CLIMATE IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE

The session pointed out the acute effects of extreme temperatures on agriculture, using Ukraine as a case study. Prolonged heat and drought conditions have significantly reduced soil moisture and crop yields with similar patterns observed across Europe, India, China, Pakistan, Sub-Saharan Africa and North America. These short-term agricultural impacts underscore the broader systemic challenges posed by climate change.

Discussions also highlighted the limitations of past mitigation efforts, suggesting that meaningful intervention would have required action a decade ago. It was stressed the need for a paradigm shift, advocating for grassroots initiatives as well as an ethical decision-making in industry and governance. The global nature of heat-related mortality and record-breaking temperatures reinforces the urgency for coordinated, long-term climate adaptation strategies.

While extreme weather events have long been present, their intensity and frequency are increasing with floods posing especially severe and lasting impacts compared to wildfires. Insurers are already withdrawing coverage in high-risk areas, highlighting the scale of economic disruption. Emerging health threats, such as thunderstorm asthma and the spread of new disease vectors, further illustrate the systemic consequences of environmental change.

Together, these developments suggest a world where geopolitical fragmentation and accelerating climate instability intersect, reshaping both international order and domestic resilience.

SYSTEMIC RISKS FROM FOOD COSTS AND GLOBAL TENSIONS

The discussion underscored mounting pressures across food security, climate resilience and geopolitical dynamics. Despite being a food-producing nation, consumers are paying significantly higher prices for basic agricultural products such as milk, meat and fish with little of the added cost reaching farmers. This disparity highlights inefficiencies and inequities within supply chains.

The debate also touched on the environmental and economic implications of data centres. While their expansion - primarily by US firms - raises concerns over sustainability, they provide vital security-related employment and are increasingly embedded in the digital economy. Their presence illustrates a trade-off between environmental costs and economic benefits.

On the international front, Haiti remains in turmoil with political instability, criminal control and climate vulnerability compounding the crisis. The kidnapping of a foreign national NGO worker has drawn renewed attention to the deteriorating security environment, while interim leadership struggles to establish authority.

Meanwhile, Ireland faces diplomatic friction over a parliamentary initiative on occupied territories, prompting pushback from US lawmakers who have raised the prospect of economic repercussions. Combined with the deepening crisis in Gaza, this places Ireland in a difficult position between domestic policy debates and international political pressures. Overall, the analysis highlighted how domestic economic pressures and geopolitical tensions interlock to test resilience at multiple levels.

CLIMATE RISKS, STRATEGIC TRADE TENSIONS AND SHIFTING GLOBAL ALIGNMENTS

The session underscored two pressing challenges:

- the worsening impacts of climate change,
- and the growing instability in global trade relations.

On the climate front, the discussion highlighted that while environmental shifts such as floods and glacial melting are well understood, insufficient action is taken to mitigate their secondary impacts. Moreover, it is significant to stress that land grabbing, unsafe construction practices and inadequate safety measures were highlighted as drivers of preventable devastation, leading to compounding risks posed by climate change itself.

Attention then turned to trade and geopolitics, focusing on rising U.S.–India tensions following tariff hikes and cancelled defence deals. While short-term negotiations may stabilise relations, the longer-term outlook points to growing strategic divergence. The breakdown risks accelerating global realignment with states seeking to reduce dependency on the U.S., fostering closer South-South cooperation and potentially advancing de-dollarisation efforts.

Overall, the discussion highlighted the urgent need for proactive climate adaptation and more sustainable approaches to international trade, warning that short-term economic decisions risk amplifying long-term global insecurity.

CONVERGING CLIMATE PRESSURES IN THE UK

The discussion highlighted the intersecting pressures of climate policy mismanagement and escalating political tensions. In the UK, increasing taxes on farmers alongside the conversion of agricultural land into solar farms were cited as contradictory measures that undermine food security. Years of underinvestment in water infrastructure, particularly in the Southeast have compounded vulnerabilities with recent water shortages exposing systemic fragility. These overlapping issues were described as converging into a potential ‘perfect storm.’ This analysis underscored how governance gaps in both climate adaptation and social cohesion risk amplifying instability at national and community levels.



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SERBIA'S WILDFIRES EXPOSE SYSTEMIC GAPS IN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Serbia has declared a state of emergency following more than 800 wildfires across southern regions, which destroyed homes, farmland, livestock and forests. Many rural families, particularly older populations reliant on agriculture and forestry have lost their livelihoods. While extreme heat and strong winds intensified the fires, experts underscore that weak institutional capacity has been the decisive factor. The country lacks a current national emergency strategy, firefighting resources are limited and sadly, preventive systems remain underfunded.

Human negligence, including illegal land burning and careless waste disposal has compounded the crisis. The Red Cross has provided early support to displaced communities, but recovery will be prolonged. Analysts stress that Serbia must shift from reactive crisis management to proactive disaster preparedness through better coordination, community resilience and effective investment in prevention.

Alongside the immediate destruction, broader environmental changes are affecting public health. Shifting climate patterns are lengthening pollen seasons, worsening allergy symptoms and highlighting the interconnected nature of environmental and health crises.

RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS IN SERBIA'S MINING STRATEGY

Serbia's newly announced strategy for managing mineral and geological resources through 2040 seeks to align the mining sector with EU standards and promote sustainable development. The government has pledged that mining benefits will remain within the country. However, recent public hearings raised concerns over transparency when environmental activists, academics and members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts were denied entry despite prior registration.

Critics warn that the strategy could open the way for large-scale foreign investment projects with significant environmental costs, drawing parallels with Venezuela's gold mining crisis. In both cases, the exclusion of key stakeholders undermines oversight and places local communities near extraction zones at heightened risk. Venezuela's experience of corruption and violence in mining regions serves as a cautionary example of how weak governance and sidelined voices can accelerate environmental and social harm.

The Serbian case serves as a reminder of a broader lesson: it is crucial to realise that without transparency, accountability and robust environmental safeguards, it will be difficult to prioritise short-term economic gains over sustainable development. The credibility of Serbia's approach will hinge on whether public participation and environmental protection are meaningfully integrated into its long-term mining policy.

CANADA BALANCES CLIMATE PRESSURES AND STRATEGIC DEFENCE EXPANSION

Canada is confronting a record-breaking wildfire season with 7.9 million hectares lost and nearly 4,700 fires active nationwide, underscoring the accelerating impacts of climate change. These environmental pressures are paralleled by major shifts in defence and economic strategy. A new critical mineral supply chain partnership with Germany highlights Canada's role in securing rare earths and other strategic resources, particularly as global competition intensifies amid Chinese export restrictions.

Domestically, defence investment is undergoing unprecedented expansion. The Canadian military has implemented a 20% pay increase, signalling a renewed commitment to personnel retention and force readiness. Simultaneously, Ottawa is advancing plans to modernise North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), construct new northern bases and expand Arctic capabilities, including potential acquisitions of new submarines, ships and fighter jets to replace aging platforms. With defence spending currently at 1.2% of GDP but discussions underway to raise it significantly, Canada is repositioning itself as a more active security player.

Overall, these developments reflect a broader recalibration:

- Addressing internal vulnerabilities caused by climate-driven crises
- Investing heavily in national defence infrastructure and strategic partnerships to adapt to an increasingly volatile global order



HEATWAVES REVEAL GOVERNANCE FAILURES AND ENERGY FRAGILITY IN EGYPT

Record-breaking heat in Egypt has pushed electricity consumption to unprecedented levels, overwhelming infrastructure and testing societal resilience. With temperatures climbing beyond 45°C, air conditioning systems are failing, while citizens face conditions that were once considered extreme but are now routine. Sadly, the rapid escalation of climate extremes highlights both environmental transformation and systemic fragility.

This crisis reflects deeper governance failures. Corruption, lack of transparency and entrenched vested interests have left institutions unprepared for predictable shocks. Critical national systems - including communications infrastructure - remain vulnerable with a single fire recently disabling connectivity nationwide for a week. The absence of credible crisis planning or backup mechanisms reveals an underlying structural weakness across Egypt and comparable states in the Middle East and Africa.

This critical situation illustrates the dual challenge of climate adaptation and governance reform. Without systemic resilience, both citizens and businesses remain exposed to cascading risks from environmental stress, energy insecurity and institutional incapacity.

UNDERSTANDING ESCALATORY HAZARDS AND THE CHALLENGES OF POLICY RESPONSE

The session highlighted the critical need to define and understand ‘mega events’ and escalatory hazards, as outlined in UN reports with volcanoes cited as a historically disruptive example affecting food production and global systems. Emphasis was placed on prioritising resource allocation for survivors requiring medical care, rather than focusing solely on mortality figures. Current political and administrative frameworks struggle to integrate long-term catastrophic scenarios, as policymakers are primarily occupied with immediate societal issues. While legislative frameworks, such as Victoria’s consequence management laws, exist to address large-scale crises, fostering deep-level strategic thinking and public comprehension of potential consequences remains a significant challenge.



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SEISMIC RISK AND WATER RESILIENCE CHALLENGES

Beyond geopolitical developments, participants noted that a major seismic event - one of the six largest earthquakes ever recorded - received little global attention. Although the immediate tsunami impact was limited to ripples across the Kamchatka region, the event served as a reminder of the unpredictability of seismic activity and the potentially devastating consequences of underestimating such risks, as demonstrated by the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami two decades earlier.

On the other hand, water security emerged as a critical risk area with experts noting that deprivation could rapidly create severe humanitarian and geopolitical pressures. Large-scale water management projects require resilient planning, including contingencies for infrastructure failure, cyber threats and ‘black swan’ scenarios to ensure national survival under extreme conditions.

This segment reinforced the need for vigilance across multiple domains - diplomacy, security and disaster preparedness - underscoring the interconnected nature of emerging risks in a volatile global environment.

RISK MODELLING AND ITS LIMITS IN REAL: WORLD CRISIS RESPONSE

The discussion underscored the practical challenges of applying risk modelling in emergency and crisis management contexts. While advanced models can quantify risk scenarios with impressive levels of detail, their utility often lies not in precision but in providing actionable insights. For decision-makers, particularly in crisis situations, the critical questions remain:

- **how severe could an event be**
- **what systems are likely to break**
- **what immediate resources are needed to mitigate consequences**

Concerns were raised about the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into modelling processes, particularly the risk of embedding and amplifying biases through data selection and processing. This risk highlights the importance of transparency in model design and the need for scrutiny of the assumptions underpinning outputs. Insurance and reinsurance firms were cited as examples of best practice in risk modelling with their sophisticated metrics and extensive datasets offering valuable perspectives on quantifying exposure. However, such data is often proprietary, limiting its accessibility to broader emergency management stakeholders.

The limitations of government-led modelling were also noted. In some cases, federal agencies have historically downplayed risks, partly to avoid committing to preparedness measures that could prove politically or operationally difficult. This approach has contributed to gaps in readiness and eroded trust in official models.

Finally, it was emphasised the importance of translating complex models into concise, decision-ready information for policymakers. Leaders often operate with limited time and capacity, requiring risks to be framed in clear, prioritised terms. Without this, even the most advanced modelling may fail to inform effective action.

PREPARING FOR THE INEVITABLE: SIMPLIFYING RISK MODELLING TO PROTECT PEOPLE OVER PROFITS

The conversation highlighted the shortcomings of overly complex risk models when dealing with the inherently dynamic nature of risk. While technologies, regulations and market conditions continually shift, the core risks themselves are rarely new; nearly every catastrophic event has occurred in some form before. What changes is the magnitude and context.

In this light, scenario-based preparedness and operational stress-testing were emphasised as far more effective than reliance on abstract probability models. By creating realistic exercises - such as simulating mining accidents or large-scale community disasters - organisations cannot only test their readiness, but also refine procedures and strengthen the resilience of frontline teams. This approach reframes risk from a theoretical calculation into a practical question of preparedness and response.

A critical point raised was the tendency of many organisations to prioritise financial metrics over human safety. Risk registers often centre on projected monetary losses while sidelining the impact on people. Such a framework was called ‘fundamentally flawed’: **without protecting lives, financial calculations are meaningless.**

The argument concluded that effective risk governance must return to essentials - focusing on people as the core asset, stripping away unnecessary complexity and embedding emotional intelligence and moral responsibility into decision-making. In doing so, organisations can move beyond ‘rolling the dice’ with models and instead cultivate resilience that is both humane and actionable.

ACTUARIAL RISK MODELS UNDER PRESSURE FROM UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL EVENTS

The session highlighted significant challenges facing the actuarial and insurance sectors as traditional risk models, based on historical data, struggle to capture current realities. Increasingly severe and geographically atypical wildfires and floods, alongside the resurgence of piracy and other emergent threats, are undermining conventional assumptions about risk.

The discussion also emphasised the need for dynamic approaches, integrating global and localised models to better anticipate and manage evolving hazards. Insurers are under pressure to adapt their methodologies to reflect these changing conditions, ensuring that risk assessments remain relevant in a rapidly shifting environment. The session concluded with an invitation to share resources and strategies that could support the sector in navigating this period of transformation.



PREPARING FOR CATASTROPHIC RISK: CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND LESSONS FROM HISTORY

The session explored how organisations must anticipate and prepare for catastrophic events, drawing parallels between natural disasters and corporate crises. Using the example of recent earthquakes and tsunami casualty projections, participants underscored the tension between large-scale devastation and local accountability. Even in the face of overwhelming disaster scenarios, organisations should be expected to account for every casualty and demonstrate adequate preparedness measures.

The discussion also highlighted that reputational and operational risks are closely intertwined. Companies, like public agencies, face intense scrutiny when their crisis responses fail with leadership accountability extending to decisions taken - or not taken - before an event. Historic crises, such as the Tylenol case back in 1982 were referenced as enduring lessons on the importance of proactive risk management and transparent communication.

As public expectations and regulatory oversight increase, failure to prepare for predictable risks - whether environmental, operational or reputational - can erode trust and jeopardise leadership. In conclusion, by learning from history, scenario planning and clear communication must form the backbone of corporate crisis readiness in an era of escalating threats.



SCENARIO PLANNING REVEALS RISKS MISSED BY TRADITIONAL FORECASTS

Scenario-based foresight methods, such as prospective hindsight, provide an alternative to conventional forecasting by starting with future endpoints and working backwards to identify plausible pathways. This approach is particularly effective in uncovering long-tail risks—low-probability, high-impact events that often fall outside standard models yet carry significant market and systemic consequences.

By leveraging historical market and insurance data combined with quantitative tools like Monte Carlo simulations, these methods enable the exploration of complex risk interactions across domains such as cybersecurity, climate change, infrastructure vulnerability and geopolitical instability. Unlike central tendency forecasts, this approach emphasises uncertainty, fuzzy boundaries as well as contrarian insights that may expose hidden opportunities or vulnerabilities.

However, challenges remain. Market participants often dismiss long-term systemic threats as ‘priced in’ and corporate forecasts typically lack precision beyond short horizons. Therefore, integrating qualitative foresight with quantitative modelling helps capture unknowns and improve preparedness, but institutional resistance and short-term thinking continue to limit adoption.

GLOBAL RISK MODELLING REVEALS PROMISE AND LIMITS OF PREDICTIVE TOOLS

The role of predictive modelling was examined in anticipating systemic risks, emphasising the importance of assessing multiple interlinked futures rather than isolated variables. Traditional sectoral or national models - focused on food, energy or single-country outcomes - were contrasted with global system models that integrate fundamental drivers such as food, water, energy, demographics and capital. By encompassing the entire system, such approaches reduce distortions caused by external leakages and provide a clearer view of global vulnerabilities.

The discussion also highlighted ExoShock, an evolution of earlier models developed at Anglia Ruskin University, as an example of how integrated frameworks can better capture systemic dynamics. Yet challenges remain, particularly regarding the quality of modelling inputs and the interpretation of results. The integration of AI and large language models offers new opportunities to enhance predictive capabilities, raising questions about the extent to which these tools are already shaping policies without explicit acknowledgment.

A central theme was the burden of foresight: the realisation that some risks, such as climate change, cannot be altered despite the capacity to foresee them. This underscores both the promise and the limitations of risk modelling as a tool for influencing decision-making in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

AI IN RISK MODELLING: PROMISE, PITFALLS AND THE THREAT OF KNOWLEDGE REDUCTION

Recent discussions highlighted growing concerns about the integration of artificial intelligence into risk modelling and decision-making processes. While AI offers powerful tools for analysing vast datasets and generating predictive models, there are mounting risks associated with over-reliance on its outputs. A key issue is the phenomenon of 'model collapse,' where AI systems increasingly consume and replicate their own outputs, leading to a narrowing of knowledge and compounding errors.

It was also underscored that AI-generated models may appear credible but can contain fundamental flaws, particularly when applied to critical areas such as crowd management or systemic risk analysis. This raises the danger of decisions being based on superficially robust yet practically unreliable models.

The debate also underscored the broader epistemological concern: instead of expanding human understanding, AI could contribute to a reductive cycle that diminishes knowledge. Against this backdrop, questions were raised about how best to integrate AI into foresight and scenario planning without undermining the quality of insight or increasing systemic vulnerabilities.

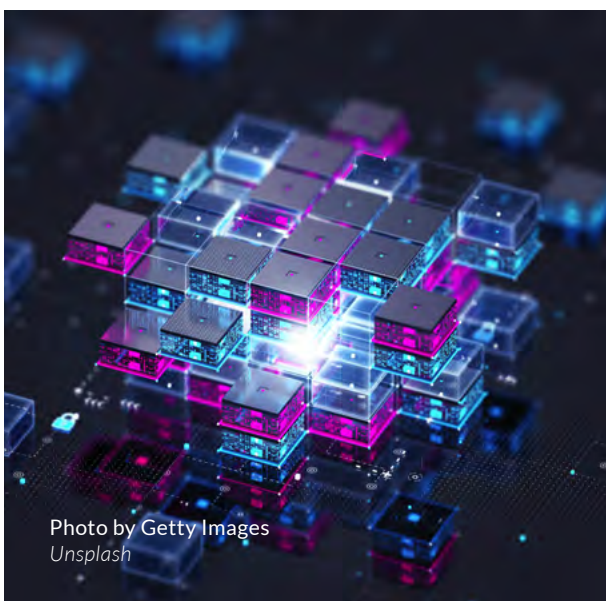


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BEYOND BLACK SWANS: THE IMPORTANCE OF WEAK SIGNALS AND DIVERSE THINKING IN RISK MODELLING

First and foremost, it is important to underscore the limitations of labelling major crises as 'black swan' events. Historical cases such as the 9/11 attacks or the Covid-19 pandemic were highlighted as examples where potential scenarios had already been anticipated through prior modelling and exercises. These events, often framed as unforeseeable, in fact demonstrated that weak signals and risk indicators were present but insufficiently acted upon.

Attention was drawn to the concept of 'grey rhinos' - highly probable yet neglected threats - emphasising the need for decision-makers to focus more systematically on identifying and interpreting such signals. The integration of neurodiverse and unconventional perspectives into defence and strategic planning was presented as a way to overcome the constraints of siloed thinking. By incorporating out-of-the-box approaches, organisations can improve foresight and scenario planning, thereby strengthening resilience against both predictable and emerging risks.

In conclusion, the analysis concluded that systemic challenges in business, government and risk modelling stem from entrenched practices and limited perspectives. A shift toward broader, more inclusive thinking and proactive recognition of weak signals is essential to improve preparedness and avoid repeating the mistakes of underestimating foreseeable threats.

BREAKING SILOS: THE CHALLENGES AND IMPERATIVES OF MULTI-HAZARD RISK MODELLING

The value of risk models as reference tools for decision-making can make a tangible difference in risk assessment and mitigation. Effective foresight requires interdisciplinary collaboration that avoids single-hazard or single-sector silos. By integrating diverse data, expertise and perspectives, models could better reflect not only systemic interconnections and historical responses, but also potential future permutations.

Current approaches to multi-hazard risk management remain fragmented with little consensus or standardisation. Tools often fail to meet operational needs, leaving decision-makers with data-heavy but impractical outputs. While international frameworks such as Sendai have advanced awareness, they risk reinforcing siloed approaches that are outdated and ill-suited to evolving realities.

The debate underscored the need to move beyond overcomplication and toward actionable, evidence-based insights. Information sharing across sectors and organisations remains limited, hindering collective preparedness. It was also highlighted that in an era of rising risks and diminishing resources, stronger cooperative alignment is not only strategic but also an ethical imperative. Building resilience will depend on overcoming institutional reluctance to share knowledge and on embracing a whole-of-society approach that prioritises collective benefit over narrow interests.

THE COMPLEX REALITIES OF RISK MODELLING, PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

During the session, participants examined the practical challenges of applying risk modelling and foresight to disaster preparedness and emergency management. While short-term horizon scanning is well established, projecting scenarios to 2050 demands leaps of imagination and tools that remain underdeveloped. This gap highlights the tension between modelling as a technical exercise and foresight as a qualitative, futures-oriented discipline.

Cross-silo collaboration and partnerships emerged as both essential and problematic. While often promoted as a solution, partnerships carry inherent tensions: they require not only information sharing but active, forward-leaning engagement with a clear purpose. Without this, partnerships risk devolving into 'toxic positivity' - well-intentioned but ineffective commitments that fail to deliver outcomes.

The conversation also highlighted divergent approaches to risk assessment. Risk-agnostic frameworks, focused on common consequences such as evacuation or casualty care can streamline preparedness, but they risk overlooking the fact that some hazards demand highly specialised responses.

Finally, it was highlighted that resilience requires more than technical modelling or institutional coordination - it depends on effective risk communication. Leaders already struggle to integrate complex information into actionable strategies and trying to engage the wider public, adds another dimension of difficulty. Altogether, it is crucial to ensure that society understands, accepts and prepares for risks not in the foreseeable future, but right now.

RISK MODELLING AND THE MORAL IMPERATIVE OF ACTION

Discussions of risk assessment often focus on data, models and statistical precision, yet the moral dimension of decision-making remains equally critical. Risk models, as Nobel Laureate (Economics) Myron Scholes emphasises, require careful interpretation and are only useful when translated into meaningful action.

The recent experience of evacuating civilians from Mariupol illustrates this principle starkly. In that context, risk was not measured in financial terms but in human lives - success was defined by bringing people to safety, not by recovering resources. Such examples underscore the importance of combining technical risk tools with emotional intelligence and moral responsibility.

Ultimately, risk modelling is not an end in itself but a guide for action. Its true value lies in shaping decisions that protect communities and uphold ethical standards, especially in contexts of conflict and humanitarian crisis where lives, rather than assets, are at stake.



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LEADERSHIP AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN RISK GOVERNANCE

The discussion underscored that effective risk governance depends not only on technical models but on leadership choices shaped by emotional intelligence and moral clarity. Neurodiverse perspectives, when placed in the right context with proper support can bring significant value to decision-making, yet poor leadership can just as easily create vulnerability by failing to recognize or harness this potential.

At the core lies the persistent problem of organisational silos. While lack of information-sharing is often acknowledged, the deeper question - why sharing fails - points directly to leadership shortcomings. Choosing the wrong people for the wrong roles is both an intellectual and moral failure.

The conversation highlighted the need to confront leaders whose decisions, whether through negligence, incompetence or self-interest, undermine resilience and collective preparedness. As Artificial Intelligence and digitalisation advance, the risks of poor leadership are amplified, making the integration of moral responsibility into governance an urgent imperative.

CASE STUDY:

RISK MODELLING IN THE BALKANS: LINKING PREDICTION TO ACTION

The Balkan region faces a convergence of risks shaped by political uncertainty, economic pressures, social divisions and mounting environmental threats such as floods, heatwaves and wildfires. These overlapping challenges often create chain reactions:

- political tensions can disrupt energy supplies
- strained resources may undermine social stability
- climate events place additional pressure on fragile infrastructure

In this context, risk modelling serves as more than a predictive tool - it highlights the interconnections between risks and enables planning across complex systems. Even relatively simple models can provide valuable insights, helping organisations and communities prepare, allocate resources more effectively and finally, respond more rapidly when crises arise.

The critical challenge lies not in identifying risks but in translating knowledge into meaningful action. For the Balkans, where history, politics and environmental pressures intersect, the effectiveness of risk modelling will be measured by whether it informs resilience strategies and ultimately enhances safety for communities across the region.



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GOVERNANCE,
RESILIENCE AND
MORAL IMPERATIVES

CONTRADICTIONS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE: PUBLIC HEALTH, INDUSTRY AND STRATEGIC SECURITY

Discussions highlighted growing concerns about the influence of major industries on public health and the broader failure of market-driven actors to prioritise long-term societal well-being. Recent reports showing that one-third of children's food intake is hyper-processed were cited as evidence of systemic risks that will contribute to future obesity and associated health crises. This was framed within a wider critique of the assumption that large corporations - including pharmaceutical, energy and financial sectors - can be relied upon to act in the interests of humanity.

The conversation also examined contradictions in national security policy. The United States has openly acknowledged that China and Russia are deeply embedded in its civilian and military infrastructure, while the UK's strategic security review similarly identifies China as a strategic threat. However, in parallel, UK trade policy continues to encourage technological, industrial as well as academic partnerships with China. These conflicting approaches raise questions about coherence, risk management and the credibility of long-term strategy.

Overall, the key message was the importance of maintaining a clear record of these debates for future review, situating them within the broader context of shifting global dynamics and the need for consistent, forward-looking policy.

BRIDGING TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY AMID RISING GLOBAL PRESSURES

The session highlighted the pressing need to integrate technological innovation with environmental and security imperatives. Drawing parallels with recent arguments from senior U.S. military leadership, the discussion emphasised the importance of scale, urgency and adaptability in adopting new technologies. Companies such as Palantir, despite controversy, are becoming central to government operations in data management and decision support, underscoring the necessity of engaging with key enablers rather than dismissing them outright.

Beyond technology, participants stressed the need for environmentalists and technologists to break down barriers and collaborate, aligning sustainability goals with strategic innovation. The conversation also touched on geopolitical developments, including the United States doubling its reward to \$50 million for the capture of Nicolás Maduro, leader of Cartel de los Soles, which is responsible for trafficking drugs into the United States. The U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Cartel de Los Soles as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), a move that reflects the continued securitisation of transnational criminal activity.

Overall, the session highlighted that effective responses to global challenges require cross-sector cooperation, pragmatism and a willingness to engage with influential actors, even when they are not universally trusted.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IN AN EVER-EVOLVING WORLD

The session examined the evolving nature of corporate risk in a world where crises - once rare and exceptional - have become frequent and complex. Traditional definitions of disaster and crisis are shifting as organisations confront an expanded spectrum of threats, from self-radicalised individuals carrying out unpredictable attacks to climate-driven disasters such as floods, earthquakes and wildfires across multiple regions.

Participants noted that while major geopolitical events often remain beyond corporate control, they heighten awareness of the need for preparedness at both organisational and site levels. Increasingly, companies are focusing on mitigation measures, countermeasures and scenario-based planning to address risks that are no longer hypothetical but probable.

A key theme of the discussion was the rise of social media as both a risk multiplier and a reputational battleground. Reputational damage, amplified through digital channels is now viewed as a critical vulnerability with communications functions becoming integral to corporate crisis exercises and response plans. The episode highlighted that timely, credible messaging is essential to counter misinformation and to protect trust, share value and operational continuity.

Overall, the key message was that crisis management strategies must now integrate physical security and climate risks as well as reputational defence within a unified approach, reflecting the reality that crises unfold simultaneously in both physical and digital domains.

CRISIS LEADERSHIP UNDER PRESSURE: CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY AND DECISION- MAKING IN EXTREME EVENTS

The challenges of decision-making and accountability during extreme crises were investigated during the session, highlighting how corporate and public leaders must navigate unpredictable, high-stakes scenarios with incomplete information. Using historic and contemporary examples - from the Tylenol poisoning crisis to the Grenfell Tower fire in London - the discussion underscored the tension between public expectation, operational constraints and the moral duty to act.

The Tylenol case was presented as a benchmark for effective corporate crisis management: decisive action, transparent communication and prioritising public safety over profit. By contrast, the Grenfell Tower fire illustrated the limits of established protocols when faced with unprecedented conditions, raising questions about public inquiries, retrospective judgement, and more on how to balance adherence to established procedures with the need for adaptive action in real time.

Participants agreed that today's leaders increasingly face 'least-worst' choices, where even well-intentioned decisions can have tragic outcomes. This reality emphasises the need for robust preparedness, clear communication strategies and a culture of responsibility that distinguishes between unavoidable error and preventable negligence. In an era of escalating crises, organisations must be equipped not only to respond effectively but also to demonstrate transparency, accountability and most importantly, learning in the aftermath.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: BRIDGING STRATEGY AND FRONTLINE REALITIES

The session highlighted also the critical importance of balancing high-level risk oversight with a grounded understanding of operational realities. As organisations and governments face increasingly complex crises - from geopolitical tensions to industrial and infrastructural hazards - there is a growing danger of desensitisation at senior levels. When risks become mere line items on a register, the human and operational consequences behind them risk being obscured.

There was an emphasis on the need to reverse-engineer risk analysis by starting with potential human impact and then working back to mitigation measures. This approach helps prevent blind spots and strengthens the effectiveness of crisis preparation and response.

The conversation also addressed the tension between 'no blame' and 'no accountability' cultures. While it is essential to avoid scapegoating individuals acting under constrained circumstances, organisations must still ensure that structural under-resourcing, poor oversight and process failures are recognised and rectified.

Overall, the discussion called for a renewed focus on embedding accountability, empathy and operational awareness into risk management processes at every level. Without such recalibration, even highly experienced organisations risk making decisions that undermine safety, resilience and most of all, public trust.

EMBEDDING GROUND-LEVEL REALITIES INTO CRISIS DECISION-MAKING

The discussion focused on the disconnect between high-level crisis inquiries and the real-life impacts experienced on the ground, using the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack as a case study. Initial reports, such as the Kerslake Report, were criticised for being overly congratulatory and failing to address the operational shortcomings that had profound consequences for victims and responders alike. This highlighted how top-level reviews can lose sight of the practical, life-and-death challenges - such as access to medical supplies, water and evacuation resources - that define real-world crisis management.

Furthermore, the participants stressed the importance of redefining what constitutes an 'acceptable' response at organizational and governmental levels. Senior leadership must avoid the trap of hindsight bias and instead build frameworks that integrate operational realities into strategic decision-making. Comparisons were drawn with the scrutiny faced by Captain Sullenberger ("Sully") after the Hudson River landing, illustrating how post-event evaluations can penalise effective decision-making under pressure.

Additionally, decision-making under risk and reward was explored through behavioural examples, showing how incentives and perceived stakes fundamentally alter choices. This reinforced the need for leaders to recognise how pressure, accountability and operational constraints shape outcomes in crises.

The conversation ultimately called for a shift in mindset: moving from retrospective blame towards proactive and ground-informed crisis leadership capable of both strategic oversight and operational empathy.

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

The conversation underscored the growing need to address today's 'wicked problems' - complex, interconnected challenges that resist simple solutions - by cultivating moral fortitude and ethical understanding from the ground up. Rather than focusing solely on geopolitics or immediate crises, the discussion centred on the deeper roots of effective leadership and decision-making, starting in the classroom. It was highlighted that irrespective of race, religion or culture, instilling strong moral foundations in future generations is essential to creating leaders capable of navigating crises with clarity, fairness and accountability.

Drawing on Horst Rittel and Melvin Weber's 1973 framework on 'wicked problems,' the conversation emphasised the unique weight of responsibility that comes with leadership. While making mistakes is part of the learning process, being fundamentally wrong in critical decisions is unacceptable due to the far-reaching consequences such errors can have.

This session positions ethical education not as a peripheral concern but as a strategic imperative for building resilience not exclusively in organisations and governments, but also communities. By prioritising moral clarity and decision-making integrity, leaders can better manage dynamic crises, reduce harm and rebuild public trust in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

REFRAMING GLOBAL CRISIS DIALOGUE: BUILDING AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The latest Global Crisis Watch session marked a conscious shift from its traditional format toward a more inclusive, dialogue-driven approach. The goal is to foster a sustained conversation among crisis managers, drawing on the collective experience and expertise of the community. By moving away from a purely broadcast model and encouraging active participation, the initiative aims to deepen the exchange of ideas, lessons learned and best practices across the field.

This shift reflects recognition of the growing complexity and interconnectedness of global crises, where knowledge-sharing and cross-sector collaboration are essential to effective preparedness and response. The value of these discussions was emphasised in building resilience and strengthening networks, as well as shaping more adaptive strategies to meet emerging challenges.



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BEYOND INFRASTRUCTURE: EMBEDDING CIVILIAN SURVIVABILITY IN RISK GOVERNANCE

The need to broaden risk monitoring beyond physical damage to infrastructure and property was significantly underscored during this session, highlighting the often-overlooked dimension of human survivability.

While infrastructure risks can be assessed and managed in structured ways, people remain at the core of crisis response, demanding moral as well as technical consideration. Participants pointed out the importance of cultivating a ‘civilian survivability layer’ that prepares communities for scenarios where institutional response may be delayed or absent.

Drawing inspiration from models of resilience such as Finland’s concept of ‘Sisu’, the conversation stressed that citizenship must include an acceptance of personal responsibility and collective preparedness. In doing so, risk governance can move beyond reactive consequence management toward a more integrated and resilient approach that addresses both systemic vulnerabilities and the human realities of crisis.



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INTERPRETING DATA, PUBLIC PREPAREDNESS AND THE LIMITS OF INFORMATION SHARING

The persistent challenges of risk interpretation, public preparedness and institutional information sharing were especially highlighted by many contributors during the session.

While technological systems and scientific models can reliably generate data, their value depends on accurate interpretation, which often becomes the point of failure. This raises questions about whether risk consequences should be accepted as a ‘cost of doing business’ in human society or whether they can be mitigated through more effective communication and planning.

Efforts to change public behaviour through preparedness campaigns - such as promoting personal emergency kits - have shown limited success, constrained by both financial capacity and public will. As a result, a segment of society remains consistently unprepared, suggesting structural rather than behavioural limitations.

At the institutional level, frontline responders tend to share information effectively, but as issues move higher into government structures, information is increasingly siloed and politicised. Competition for resources and control over data undermines collaboration, leaving communities vulnerable when crises demand rapid and coordinated action.

BEYOND RECOVERY: RETHINKING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, RISK AND RESILIENCE

Deep concerns were raised about the practical limitations of Artificial Intelligence (AI), described as prone to repetition, bias and an inability to distinguish between true knowledge and recycled information. Such shortcomings risk reinforcing poor practices rather than supporting meaningful decision-making, particularly when younger generations rely on AI for surface-level learning rather than deeper understanding.

Beyond technical challenges, the debate emphasised the importance of mindset and moral grounding in risk governance. Drawing on lessons from disaster management, it was argued that focusing on resilience rather than recovery leads to more sustainable outcomes.

The example of Australia's shift from a recovery-centred model to an institute for disaster resilience demonstrated how reframing priorities can reduce long-term costs and strengthen societal preparedness. Ultimately, resilience was framed as a product not only of financial investment but also of leadership, emotional intelligence and most importantly of collective moral responsibility.



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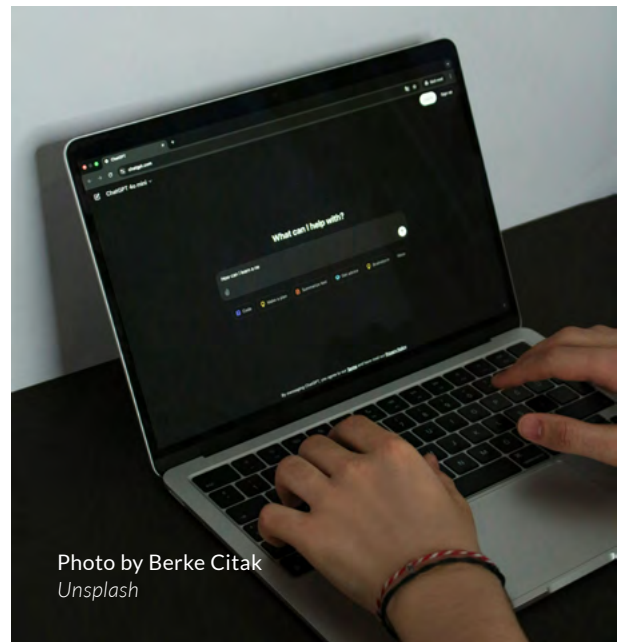


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CLOSING THE GAPS IN CRISIS RESPONSE

The discussion highlighted the critical differences between slow-moving corporate crises, such as product recalls, and high-velocity emergencies like the Ukraine conflict or catastrophic fires. While the consequences of both can be severe, fast-moving crises demand rapid, dynamic decision-making rather than prolonged top-level deliberation or PR-driven responses.

The analysis emphasised three critical 'time gaps' in crisis management:

- The Cognition Gap: recognising the problem
- The Planning Gap: developing a response plan
- The Response Gap: executing action

Case studies such as BP Deepwater Horizon, the Post Office Horizon scandal, Boeing 737 Max and Volkswagen illustrate how organisations often fail to act decisively, instead opting to obscure or delay problems.

The session underscored the need for leaders and institutions to break these patterns by accelerating recognition, planning and action in crises, ensuring timely and effective responses in situations where lives, trust and reputations are at stake.

LESSONS FROM CRISIS LEADERSHIP

The discussion highlighted the critical importance of proactive decision-making in crisis situations and the risks posed by organisational cultures that punish, rather than reward, preparedness. Drawing on the example of Rick Rescorla at Morgan Stanley on 9/11, the conversation underscored how relentless training and preparedness - even when unpopular - saved thousands of lives. This was contrasted with the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, where early action in Thailand the year before in response to a tsunami warning led to a minister's dismissal when no event materialised. The following year, similar warnings were ignored, resulting in catastrophic loss of life.

These examples illustrated a systemic problem: organisations often penalise leaders for perceived 'false alarms', while failing to implement precautionary action. The conversation also stressed the need for consistent, principled decision-making in environments of uncertainty, such as airports or large public venues, where each incident must be treated as unique rather than coloured by past outcomes.

In summary, the session called for a cultural and structural shift within organisations and government bodies to support leaders who act decisively under ambiguity, recognising that effective crisis leadership often requires unpopular but life-saving decisions.



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SANCTIONS AND THE RETURN OF OLD PATTERNS IN GLOBAL POWER POLITICS

Sanctions remain a blunt instrument in the conflict over Ukraine with limited global alignment on their application. Roughly two-thirds of the world's governments are either indifferent to or supportive of Russia, undercutting Western pressure. Divergent national sanction regimes and asset freezes have also raised questions about trust in Western financial systems, prompting interest in alternative banking hubs, notably in China.

The role of organised crime as a tool of state influence was underscored with Iran, China and other powers using criminal networks to extend reach and circumvent restrictions - a tactic long embedded in global geopolitics. China's expansionist economic and scientific activities, including growing dominance in Antarctic research, reflect its broader mercantile approach to influence.

Beyond external power plays, domestic fragility is emerging as a critical risk vector. Indonesia faces echoes of past instability as entrenched power bases resurface, while Australia grapples with declining social cohesion and rising disillusionment with political elites. These dynamics point to a convergence of international and domestic pressures, reinforcing the sense that historical patterns of influence and instability are resurfacing in new forms.

SANCTIONS AND THE LIMITS OF ECONOMIC PRESSURE IN UKRAINE

The debate over the effectiveness of economic sanctions on Russia remains central to discussions on Ukraine. Despite years of restrictive measures, Russia has demonstrated resilience, adapting through alternative financial networks, resource stockpiling and the use of third-party intermediaries. The persistence of this adaptability raises critical questions about the limits of sanctions as a standalone instrument of foreign policy.

While sanctions on Russia, Iran and North Korea have produced some economic strain, they have not fundamentally altered state behaviour. The challenge lies in identifying whether additional sectors remain to be targeted or whether sanctions fatigue has set in. Calls are growing for Europe to consider more decisive measures, given that sanctions alone have failed to deter aggression or shift strategic calculations in Moscow.

Attention also turns to the geopolitical manoeuvring ahead of the Beijing summit, where Presidents Xi, Putin, and Kim will converge. China's global economic footprint, characterised by its pervasive commercial presence and infrastructure investments, positions Beijing as a key power broker. Xi's strategy of soft diplomacy contrasts sharply with Putin's reliance on force, suggesting China may seek to balance influence without entangling itself in military escalation.

The discussion highlights a pressing dilemma at this moment: Europe faces the economic and political costs of escalation, yet prolonged reliance on sanctions risks entrenching rather than resolving the conflict.

The core question remains whether sanctions can meaningfully constrain Russia or whether alternative, potentially riskier, strategies are now required to bring the war closer to resolution.

CORRUPTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS WEAKEN GLOBAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Recent analysis highlights the critical role of governance and regulatory compliance in disaster resilience, emphasising stark contrasts between countries that implement and enforce safety standards and those that do not. While nations and states such as Japan and Alaska demonstrate the effectiveness of stringent building codes and pre-emptive planning, failures in countries like Turkey reveal the deadly consequences of regulatory waivers and inadequate enforcement. Corruption within governments, compounded by weakening public-private partnerships and declining international support, further hampers preparedness efforts. The growing disconnect between urban development ambitions - often AI-enabled or technologically advanced - and the practical reality of resilient infrastructure underscores the urgent need for honest, science-based approaches to mitigate the impacts of climate change and high-magnitude events.



Photo by David von Diemar
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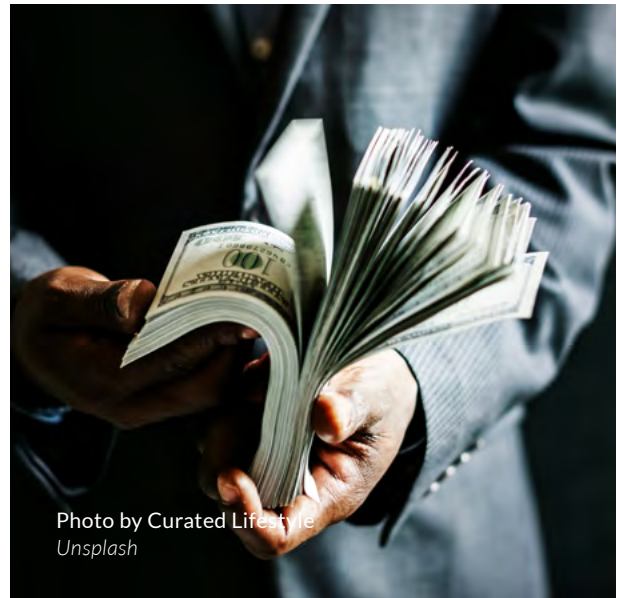


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HIDDEN NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE AND THE STRATEGIC USE OF ORGANISED CRIME

Recent discussions have underscored how states and non-state actors increasingly leverage organised crime, commercial networks and covert funding channels to exert influence abroad. Examples include the alleged use of organised crime groups by Iran in Australia, India's suspected operations against Sikh separatists in Canada and historical British reliance on local proxies during the 'Great Game.'

Such influence is not confined to overt political actions. Subtler forms include economic penetration, as seen in Dubai, where Chinese government-backed support for retail rents has enabled significant expansion of Chinese-owned businesses in historic districts. These developments illustrate how financial leverage at the local level can build long-term influence, often unnoticed until moments of geopolitical tension.

The broader challenge lies in detecting and countering these layered forms of foreign influence, which extend beyond headline-grabbing events to structural shifts in economic and political ecosystems. Left unchecked, these networks complicate policymaking and limit the ability of states to respond effectively during crises.

POLITICAL VACUUMS, MILITIA VIOLENCE AND CLIMATE STRAIN DEEPEN GLOBAL INSTABILITY

Across the Middle East and Africa, political uncertainty and armed conflict are converging with climate stress to heighten instability. Algeria is facing a power vacuum following the unexplained disappearance of its president with military generals seen as the de facto power brokers behind the political system. In Libya, militia rivalries have escalated following the killing of a senior commander with fighting spreading to key infrastructure, including Tripoli's only functioning airport - an indication of potential drift toward renewed civil war.

Sudan has entered a new phase of conflict, as the Rapid Support Forces launched drone attacks on oil and gas fields in Heglig - marking the first such strikes since the war began over two years ago. This escalation raises concerns over the protection of critical energy infrastructure in an already fragile region. Meanwhile, extreme heat across North Africa and recurrent flooding in South Asia underscore the compounding effects of climate stress on already unstable states with governments in India and Pakistan repeatedly failing to implement effective crisis management measures.

Beyond the region, global security concerns remain acute. Russia appears to be signalling strength ahead of high-level meetings with China and North Korea, seeking to position itself from a place of power despite continued strain from the war in Ukraine.

These overlapping dynamics, illustrate the increasingly interconnected risks shaping global security.

AFRICA'S EVOLVING PARTNERSHIPS: TRADE, SECURITY AND GEOPOLITICAL REALIGNMENT

China's growing role in Africa is viewed with mixed implications but broadly acknowledged as a source of tangible infrastructure and trade benefits. Free trade zones, transport projects, and investment across multiple states highlight Beijing's influence, even as concerns about cybercrime networks and dependency remain. For many African nations, Chinese engagement is seen as offering greater value than traditional Western partners, prompting a recalibration of trade strategies.

The impact of U.S. tariffs has accelerated this shift with Nigeria revising its trade policies to stabilise currency and diversify exports, while countries such as South Africa prepare retaliatory measures and Kenya develops industry support initiatives. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is central to this reorientation, strengthening intra-African trade while deepening ties with China, India and the EU.

On security, calls are mounting for African-led collaboration against terrorism and transnational threats. Proposals include intelligence sharing, joint training and capacity building across borders. However, questions remain about how effectively military- and civilian-led governments can integrate their approaches under an African Union framework.

These dynamics unfold against the backdrop of wider global conflicts, where leadership approaches in Russia, Ukraine and Gaza are contrasted. As for the role of U.S., influence remains contested. Altogether, these trends reflect Africa's evolving place in a multipolar order, marked by diversification in both economic and security alignments.

INFORMATION
WARFARE AND DIGITAL
POLARISATION

RISING POLARISATION AND THE CHANGING NATURE OF ONLINE DISCOURSE

Recent observations point to a marked transformation in the way traditionally professional platforms, such as LinkedIn, are being used. What was once a space largely confined to business updates, industry insights and networking has increasingly become a forum for highly charged political, social and cultural debates. This shift mirrors wider global tensions and suggests that public concern about economic, political, as well as environmental issues is spilling over into spaces previously seen as neutral or apolitical.

This phenomenon coincides with the broader effects of 24-hour rolling news cycles and social media platforms designed around algorithms that prioritise engagement and advertising revenue. While such systems can expand access to information and amplify marginalised voices, they also generate 'echo chambers' and reinforce polarisation. The unintended consequence is the erosion of civility and measured dialogue - even in forums traditionally associated with professional conduct.

In conclusion, the discussion underscored a growing paradox: the same technologies that democratise information and open up debate also create environments of heightened division and fatigue. As more individuals use professional platforms to voice strong opinions, the boundaries between professional discourse and public activism are blurring.

This shift has implications not only for employers and policymakers, but also for platform designers, as it raises urgent questions about the role of moderation, digital literacy and the responsibilities of companies hosting online communities.

ECHO CHAMBERS, ALGORITHMS AND THE DECLINE OF OPEN DEBATE

The accelerating shift of social media from a tool for connection into a powerful driver of polarisation and misinformation was significantly discussed throughout the session. Originally conceived as a means of informal interaction, platforms such as Facebook have evolved into ecosystems where algorithms reward outrage, echo chambers and confirmation bias. This model, designed to maximise engagement and advertising revenue, fosters environments in which users are constantly reassured of their own views, excluding alternative perspectives and undermining balanced debate.

This dynamic has serious implications for governance, public discourse and professional practice. The speed at which false or misleading information circulates online enables bad actors to shape narratives and manipulate audiences more effectively than ever before. The consequences include greater polarisation, erosion of trust in institutions and increasing difficulty for professionals in risk management, policymaking and advisory roles to maintain objectivity.

Overall, the discussion underscored the importance of creating spaces for open, balanced and informed dialogue beyond algorithm-driven echo chambers. Professional networks and forums dedicated to strategic risk and security issues must guard against bias by actively engaging with diverse viewpoints, encouraging evidence-based debate and resisting the pressures of 'business as usual' models of information consumption. Only through this approach can decision-makers reach informed, considered positions on complex global challenges.

AI MODEL LIMITATIONS AND GOVERNANCE GAPS IN CLIMATE AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY

Recent discussions have highlighted structural risks in the development and deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly the phenomenon of 'model collapse,' where generative systems increasingly train on outputs produced by other models. This recursive process risks narrowing knowledge rather than expanding it, with evidence showing convergence on uniform outputs, such as repeated random number selections across multiple models. Such trends underscore concerns about innovation stagnation and the erosion of reliability in AI-generated knowledge.

Parallel challenges are visible in climate and infrastructure policy. Rising temperatures and water shortages are intensifying pressures on national systems, yet political cycles often disincentivise long-term investment in resilience measures such as reservoir construction and renewable energy infrastructure. Short-term political priorities combined with partisan divides over energy use and industrial policy, threaten to undermine both economic stability and climate adaptation.

Together, these dynamics reflect broader governance gaps both in AI, where unchecked self-referential training risks degrading informational integrity, and in climate and infrastructure policy, where delayed decisions compound systemic vulnerabilities.

Addressing both will require sustained foresight, institutional accountability and frameworks that prioritise resilience over short-term gains.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE VS. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SKILLS IN LEARNING

The discussion highlighted concerns about the gradual integration of artificial intelligence into education and its potential impact on human-centred skills. The enduring importance of emotional intelligence in teaching and learning was further underscored especially within sectors such as criminology where perception, intuition and behavioural cues are vital.

Participants also debated the limits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in verifying identity and information, raising questions about authenticity, accountability and the balance between technological adoption and preserving essential human competencies.

The conversation concluded by emphasising the need for deliberate integration of AI into education - one that enhances rather than replaces emotional intelligence and protects the social skills that underpin trust, judgement and professional practice.



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THE PROMISES AND PERILS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The session examined AI's growing utility in tightly bounded, quantitative domains - mathematics, medicine, engineering and other STEM fields - where repeatable algorithms and large datasets produce reliable, high-value outputs. Advances in compute (including quantum prospects) were identified as potential game-changers for predictive modelling and accelerated research workflows.

Concurrently, the discussion flagged clear risks that need to be underscored such as model-generated content can propagate bias, amplify errors and fall victim to 'model collapse' when models increasingly consume one another's outputs. Reliance on opaque algorithms without rigorous domain validation risks producing plausible-looking but substantively flawed conclusions.

A recurrent theme was the indispensability of human judgement. Effective deployment requires a human-in-the-loop approach which includes experts with the ability to frame problems, validate model outputs and exercise ethical and contextual judgement.

Practical use-cases - such as rapid drafting of policy or research material - demonstrated AI's value as an efficiency and synthesis tool, but only when coupled with domain expertise to verify, interpret and refine results.

Policy and practice implications emphasised during the session included the ability to:

- Strengthen governance and transparency around model design and training data
- Mandate domain-specific validation
- Stress-testing before operational use
- Build workforce capabilities in AI literacy and critical appraisal
- Preserve clear accountability chains for decisions informed by AI.

Without these measures from AI, there are risks that could be offset by faulty decisions and eroded public trust.

In sum, AI offers substantial benefits, where problems are well-defined and data quality is high, but widespread adoption must be guided by robust oversight, interdisciplinary collaboration and an insistence on human contextualisation to turn capability into safe and reliable use.

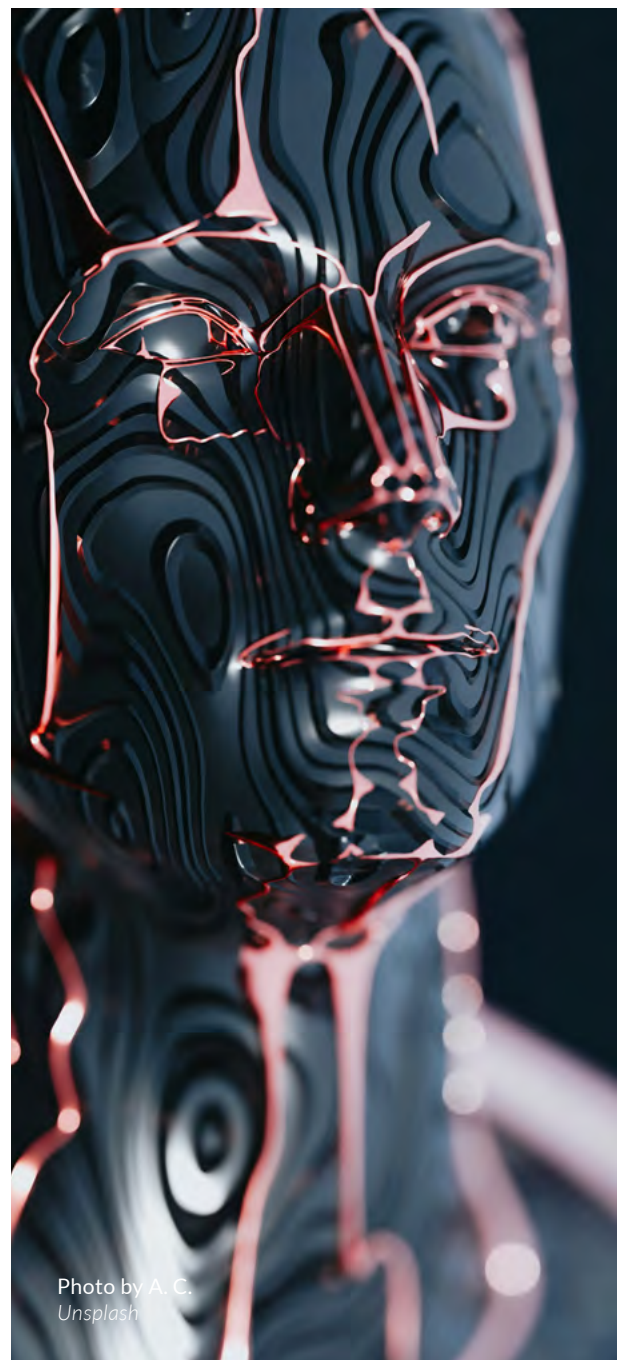


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CONCLUDING REMARKS

The September Global Risk Review reaffirmed that the Institute of Strategic Risk Management (ISRM) stands as a leading platform for high-level dialogue on risk, resilience and crisis management. This month's discussions highlighted the importance of reflective analysis and documentation. Through comprehensive reports, the ISRM captures the depth and nuance of these exchanges, providing policymakers and practitioners with a vital resource for strengthening societal resilience and improving crisis preparedness.

LESSONS IN RISK, RESILIENCE AND PERSPECTIVE

The closing dialogue brought a more personal dimension to the session. Participants reflected on lessons they would share with their younger selves - emphasising the importance of challenging assumptions, focusing on realistic objectives and recognising that meaningful impact often lies in collective rather than individual effort. These insights reinforced a central theme: *risk modelling and resilience planning must remain grounded in evidence, humility and professional scrutiny, not unquestioned assumptions or overconfidence.*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN OVERSIGHT

Discussions also underscored the need to balance innovation with oversight. The rapid rise of artificial intelligence offers transformative potential but also presents ethical and governance challenges, especially in high-stakes domains such as healthcare and risk modelling. It was stressed that while AI can enhance efficiency and insight, robust human oversight, transparency and accountability remain essential to prevent unintended consequences and maintain public trust.

BUILDING AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Finally, these sessions marked a conscious shift towards more inclusive, dialogue-driven engagement across the ISRM community. By moving beyond a purely broadcast model and fostering sustained participation from crisis managers and risk professionals, the initiative aims to deepen cross-sector learning, strengthen networks and shape adaptive strategies for an era defined by systemic uncertainty.

LOOKING AHEAD: SUSTAINED COLLABORATION AND RESILIENCE

Altogether, these discussions reaffirmed the ISRM's unique role as an open space, where difficult realities can be addressed openly, expertise can be shared constructively and practical pathways can be explored to confront global risks. The dedication to creating a well-connected and informed community, which can significantly strengthen resilience and preparedness worldwide.



THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC
RISK MANAGEMENT



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OF WICKED PROBLEMS

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