**Irish Aid**
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

CONCERN DEBATES
DEBATE IT!

CONCERN worldwide

# KNOCK OUT ROUND 3 MOTION:

## Global conflict represents the biggest barrier to reducing carbon emissions

The burning of fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases, or 'carbon emissions', the reduction of which is one of the most urgent global challenges of our time. Meeting this goal requires sustained political commitment and international cooperation, yet progress has been uneven.

Supporters of this motion may argue that geopolitical instability undermines climate action. Armed conflicts erode trust between nations, delay international climate agreements and limit the sharing of clean technologies. Governments facing security threats often divert funding away from renewable energy and climate adaptation toward military spending and crisis response.

Proponents also highlight the environmental impact of military activity itself which is heavily dependent on fossil fuels, yet emissions are often underreported or excluded from climate agreements. Active combat, the destruction of infrastructure and post-conflict reconstruction all create carbon emissions. Furthermore, concerns over energy security can lead governments to increase coal use, or oil and gas production.

Instead of conflict, opponents of the motion may point to the political and economic choices made by countries that enjoy relative peace and stability. Many major sources of carbon emissions persist regardless of war, suggesting that policy failures and consumption patterns are more significant obstacles. For example, fossil fuel dependence is deeply embedded in the global economy. Energy, transport and industrial systems remain reliant on coal, oil and gas because they are profitable and politically protected.

Another example is agriculture, which contributes to emissions through the release of methane from livestock, deforestation for grazing and growing animal feed, and high water and energy use. This is sustained by consumer demand, cultural norms and powerful industries, not conflict. Even in peaceful nations, governments are often reluctant to reform subsidies or challenge meat-heavy diets.

This debate asks whether peace is enough to deliver meaningful emissions reductions, or whether deeper political and structural change is required. Does global conflict truly represent the biggest barrier to reducing carbon emissions?

*Debate it!*