MECCO MONTHLY SUMMARIES
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"We must make up for lost time"

Views of the Serra de A Capelada wind farm, in Cedeira, Spain, this July. Photo: ÓSCAR CORRAL/El País.

July media coverage of climate change or global warming in newspapers around the globe dropped 4% from June 2024. Meanwhile, coverage in July 2024 diminished 26% from July 2023 levels. However, Figure 1 shows that international wire services stories in July 2024 went up 13% from the previous month.

At the regional level, levels of July 2024 coverage went up in Asia (+1%), North America (+11%), and the Middle East (+57%) compared to the previous

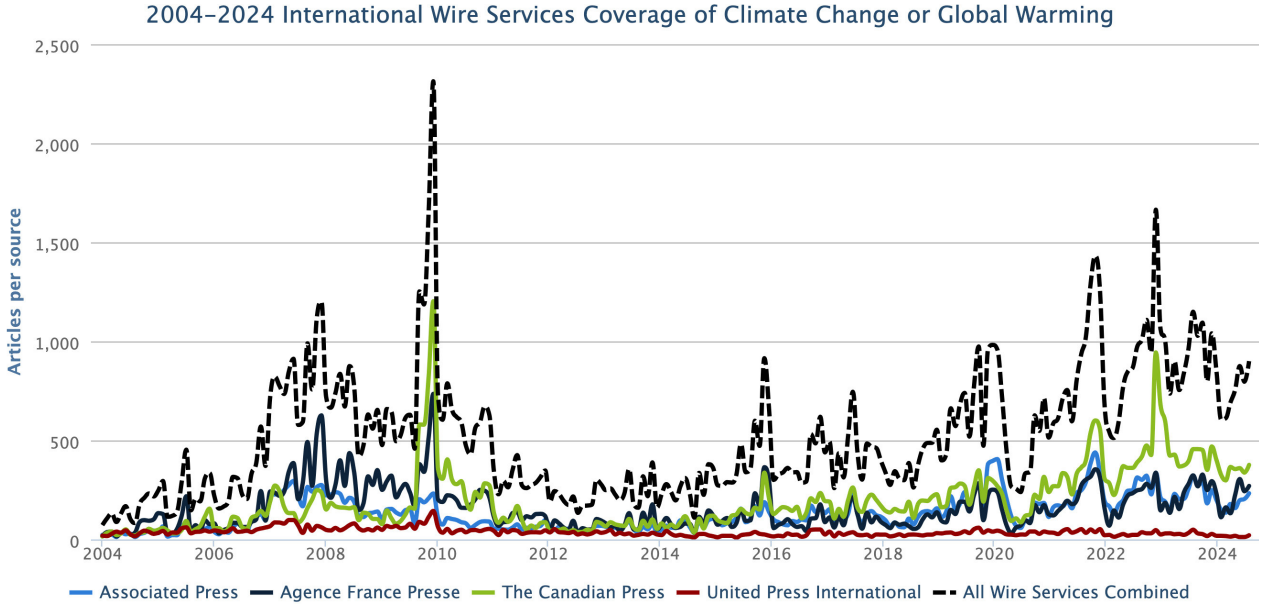

Figure 1. International wire services coverage – across *The Associated Press, Agence France Presse, The Canadian Press*, and *United Press International (UPI)* – of climate change or global warming from January 2000 through July 2024.

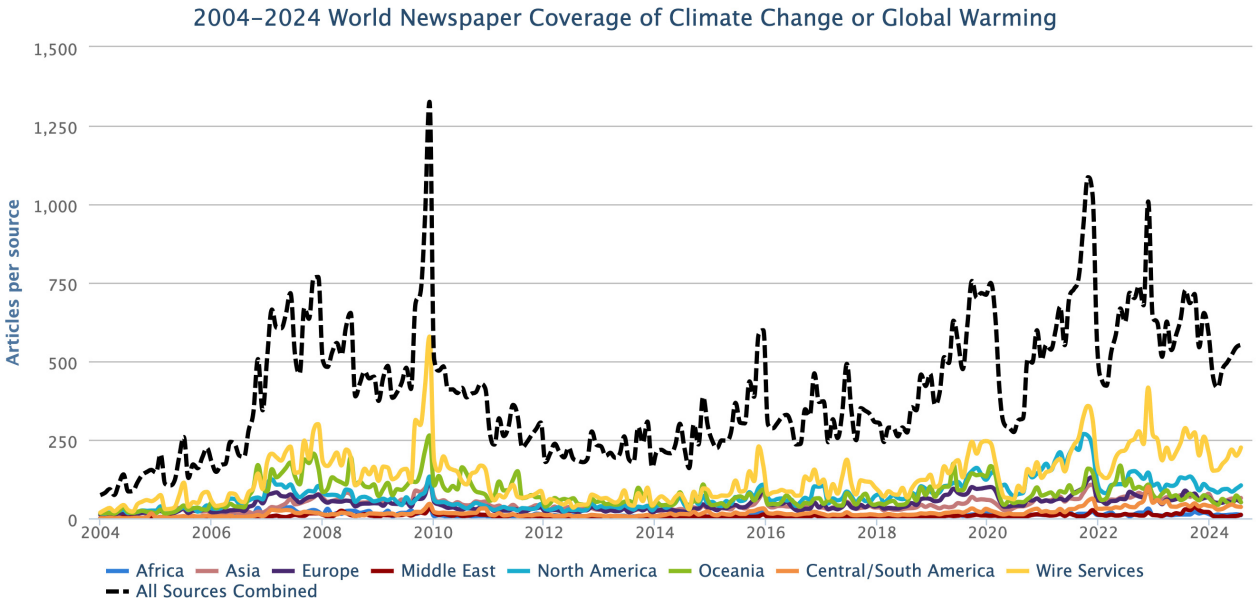

Figure 2. Newspaper media coverage of climate change or global warming in print sources in seven different regions around the world, from January 2004 through July 2024.

month of June. Meanwhile, coverage decreased in Latin America (-4%), the European Union (EU) (-13%), Africa (-23%), and Oceania (-30%). Figure 2 shows trends in newspaper media coverage at the global scale – organized into seven geographical regions around the world – from January 2004 through July 2024.

Our Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) team continues to provide three international and seven ongoing regional assessments of trends in coverage, along with 16 country-level appraisals each month. Visit our website for open-source datasets and downloadable visuals.

Moving to the content of news coverage about climate change in July 2024, many ***political*** and ***economic***-themed media stories about climate change or global warming were evident. For instance, there were several news accounts about developments in renewables, overtaking fossil fuels in electricity generation in Europe. For example, *El País* journalist Manuel Planelles reported, "The European electricity system is embarking on a transition to wean itself off fossil fuels, which the EU has to import to a large extent and which, in addition, are the main responsible for a climate crisis from which the continent cannot escape. During the first half of this year, another of the racing goals of this race was surpassed: solar and wind power generated more electricity than all fossil fuels (mainly coal and natural gas) together. This is the first time this has happened, according to a report by the group of expert analysts in energy and climate Ember."

The shake up in the United States (US) presidential race – where Joe Biden announced he would not seek a second term in office while endorsing Vice President Kamala Harris – generated several news stories about Kamala Harris' climate policy stance. For example, *New York Times* journalist Lisa Friedman reported, "Vice President Kamala Harris has for years made the environment a top concern, from prosecuting polluters as California's attorney general to sponsoring the Green New Deal as a senator to casting the tiebreaking vote as vice president for the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, the largest climate investment in United States history. As she runs for the White House, Ms. Harris is widely expected to try to protect the climate achievements of the Biden administration, a position that could resonate with voters during a summer of record heat. A clear majority of Americans, 65 percent, wants the country to focus on increasing solar, wind and other renewable energy and not fossil fuels, according to a May survey by the Pew Research Center. Last year, Ms. Harris flew to the United Nations global climate summit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where she told

world leaders that "the urgency of this moment is clear. The clock is no longer just ticking, it is banging. And we must make up for lost time." That was a subtle reference to former President Donald J. Trump, who made the United States the first and only country to withdraw from the global Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions. (The United States subsequently rejoined under President Biden.) The Republican nominee in the current race for the White House, Mr. Trump has indicated that he would again pull back from the global fight against climate change if he is elected in November. "Around the world, there are those who seek to slow or stop our progress, leaders who deny climate science, delay climate action, and spread misinformation," Ms. Harris said at the summit. "In the face of their resistance and in the context of this moment, we must do more"".

In July, there were also several ongoing media stories relating to ***ecological*** and ***meteorological*** dimensions of climate change or global warming. To begin, news stories linking hurricane Beryl – a late June and early July storm that crossed the Caribbean – with climate change or global warming were apparent. For example, *BBC* journalist Mark Poynting reported, "Hurricane Beryl has wreaked havoc in parts of the Caribbean – and put the role of climate change under the spotlight. With maximum sustained wind speeds of more than 160mph (257km/h), it became the earliest category five Atlantic hurricane in records going back around 100 years. In fact, there has only been one previous recorded case of a category five Atlantic hurricane in July – Hurricane Emily, on 16 July 2005. The causes of individual storms are complex, making it difficult to fully attribute specific cases to climate change. But exceptionally high sea surface temperatures are seen as a key reason why Hurricane Beryl has been so powerful. Usually, such strong storms only develop later in the season, after the seas have heated up through the summer. Hurricanes generally need the sea surface to be at least 27C in order to have a chance of developing. As the map below shows, waters along Hurricane Beryl's path have been much warmer than this. Map of sea temperatures along Hurricane Beryl's path across the Atlantic. Beryl has moved across exceptionally warm waters, marked by reds, generally at least 27C or 28C.

All else being equal, warmer seas mean more powerful hurricanes, because the storms can pick up more energy, enabling higher wind speeds". Meanwhile, US *National Public Radio* reporters Michael Copley and Rebecca Hersher noted,

> "Hurricane Beryl is tearing across the Caribbean this week, unleashing life-threatening flooding and dangerous wind as it heads toward Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Beryl has already racked up multiple alarming superlatives. It is the most powerful hurricane ever recorded this early in the Atlantic hurricane season, and also the earliest storm to strengthen so rapidly as it formed."

A woman looks at a beach littered with trash at Bull Bay, Jamaica, in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl. Photo: Ricardo Makyn/AFP/Getty Images.

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"A searing heat wave that has gripped much of the United States in recent days is suspected of killing at least 28 people in the last week. The number, which is based on preliminary reports from California, Oregon and Arizona, is likely to grow as authorities assess the death toll of a heat wave that began last week, delivering record-breaking temperatures throughout the West and scorching East Coast cities."

People use a misting tent outside of Blanchet House in downtown Portland, Oregon, as a heat wave continues in July. Photo: Dave Killen/The Oregonian/AFP.

In July, heat waves – with links made to climate change or global warming – were abundant in many news accounts. For example, *Washington Post* journalist Anna Phillips reported, "A searing heat wave that has gripped much of the United States in recent days is suspected of killing at least 28 people in the last week, according to reports from state officials, medical examiners and news outlets. The number, which is based on preliminary reports from California, Oregon and Arizona, is likely to grow as authorities assess the death toll of a heat wave that began last week, delivering record-breaking temperatures throughout the West and scorching East Coast cities. As of Wednesday, more than 135 million people across the Lower 48 were under heat alerts, many of which are expected to continue until the weekend. Most of the deaths have been reported in California, where the heat broke daily records late last week in a handful of major cities, including San Jose, Fresno and Oakland. In Santa Clara County, which includes San Jose, Chief Medical Examiner Michelle Jorden said her office is investigating 14 cases where people appear to have died from heat-related causes".

In mid-July, a heatwave in Japan earned news attention. For example, *Japan Times* journalists Francis Tang and Tomoko Otake reported, "The number of patients rushed to hospitals for heatstroke over the week through Sunday quadrupled from the week before as the

mercury hit 40 degrees Celsius in some cities amid a sweltering heat wave, preliminary data from the Fire and Disaster Management Agency showed Tuesday. Over that period, 9,105 people sought emergency hospital care for suspected heatstroke across the nation, more than twice the number during the same period last year". Meanwhile, *Guardian* correspondent Justin McCurry wrote, "Japan's meteorological agency has issued a heatstroke alert for 26 of the country's 47 prefectures, urging people not to go outside unless absolutely necessary, to use their air conditioners during the day and at night, and to drink plenty of water. Authorities in Japan issued the extreme heat warnings after the temperature reached 40C for the first time this year on Sunday, as the country swelters in the grip of another heatwave. Shizuoka in central Japan reported a temperature of 40C in the early afternoon on Sunday, while 244 other locations saw the mercury rise to 35C or over – a level officially recognised as 'extremely hot'".

"Scientists have said the devastating Wayanad landslides in Kerala could be the result of a combination of climate change, excessive mining and loss of forest cover in the region…heavy rain set off a series of landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district, leaving more than 120 people dead and 128 injured. Many are still feared to be trapped under debris."

Rescue teams crossing a temporary bridge to reach to a landslide site after multiple landslides in the hills in Wayanad district, in the southern state of Kerala, India. Photo: Francis Mascarenhas/Reuters.

Media portrayals in July 2024 also featured related and ongoing ***cultural***-themed stories relating to climate change or global warming. To illustrate, landslides in India – with attribution to climate change or global warming – devastated communities in the southern Indian state of Kerala. For example, *Hindustan Times* reported, "Scientists have said the devastating Wayanad landslides in Kerala could be the result of a combination of climate change, excessive mining and loss of forest cover in the region… heavy rain set off a series of landslides in Kerala's Wayanad district, leaving more than 120 people dead and 128 injured. Many are still feared to be trapped under debris. The Met Office said more heavy rainfall could occur in some places in the state over the next two days. According to the landslide atlas released by the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) National Remote Sensing Centre in 2023, 10 out of the 30 most landslide-prone districts in India were located in Kerala, with Wayanad ranked 13th. Scientists have identified a mix of causes for the landslides - namely loss of forests, climate change and excessive mining".

Also, several July 2024 media stories featured several ***scientific*** themes in news accounts. In early July, reports that June 2024 became the 13th straight month with heat records earned news attention. For example, *Associated Press* journalist Seth Borenstein wrote, "Earth's more than year-long streak of record-shattering hot months kept on simmering through June, according to the European climate service Copernicus. There's hope that the planet will soon see an end to the record-setting part of

Figure 2. Examples of newspaper front pages with climate change stories in July 2024.

the heat streak, but not the climate chaos that has come with it, scientists said. The global temperature in June was record warm for the 13th straight month and it marked the 12th straight month that the world was 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than pre-industrial times, Copernicus said in an early Monday announcement". Meanwhile, *La Vanguardia* journalist Celeste López noted, "June 2024 was the warmest June on record globally, with an average surface air temperature of 16.66°C according to ERA5 data, which is 0.67°C above the 1991–2020 average for that month and 0.14°C above the temperature in June 2023, which previously held the record for the sixth month of the year. This is the 13th consecutive month with the highest temperature recorded in the ERA5 record for the respective month. Although this is quite unusual, a similar run of monthly global temperature records occurred in 2015–2016."

Moreover, there were several stories about how heatwaves in Europe are up to 3°C warmer than before. For example, *La Vanguardia* journalists Antonio Cerrillo y Sergio Aires wrote, "Recent heatwaves across Europe have been up to 3°C warmer than previously observed, according to a study by researchers at the ClimaMeter consortium, which attributes this to climate change. The study used satellite data collected over the past 40 years. The new analysis comes after weeks of scorching temperatures across much of Europe. The impacts of the extreme heat were particularly felt in the southern and eastern parts of the continent, where there was a spate of hospitalizations and wildfires and increased energy consumption."

~ report prepared by Max Boykoff, Rogelio Fernández-Reyes, Ami Nacu-Schmidt, Jeremiah Osborne-Gowey and Olivia Pearman

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MeCCO
Media and Climate Change Observatory

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MeCCO monitors 131 sources (across newspapers, radio and TV) in 59 countries in seven different regions around the world. MeCCO assembles the data by accessing archives through through Factiva, Infomedia, ProQuest, Nifty and NexisUni databases for our work across our various institutions. These sources are selected through a decision processes involving weighting of three main factors:

Geographical Diversity

favoring a greater geographical range

Circulation

favoring higher circulating publications

Reliable Access to Archives Over Time

favoring those accessible consistently for longer periods of time

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