

“Praised Be”



Pope Francis and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople arrive for the meeting, 'Faith and Science: Towards COP26', with religious leaders in the Hall of Benedictions at the Vatican Oct. 4, 2021. Photo: Paul Haring/CNS.

September media attention to climate change or global warming in newspapers around the globe increased 19% from the previous month of August, and coverage increased 79% from a year before (September 2020). Meanwhile, September 2021 global radio coverage of climate change or global warming was up 2% from August 2021, while coverage in international wire services increased 26% from

the previous month. Compared to the previous month coverage was up in all regions: Latin America (+9%), the Middle East (+9%), Europe (+11%), Asia (+13%), Africa (+13%), Oceania (+17%), and North America (+23%). Figure 1 shows trends in newspaper media coverage at the global scale – organized into seven geographical regions around the world – from January 2004 through September 2021.

2004–2021 World Newspaper Coverage of Climate Change or Global Warming

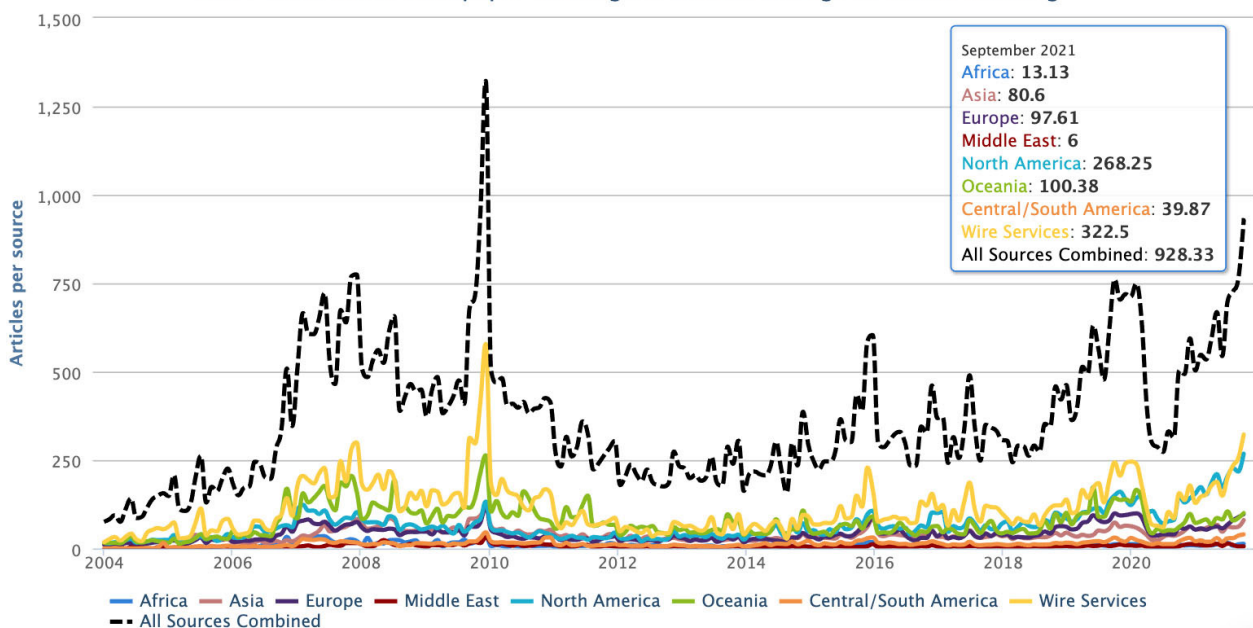


Figure 1. Newspaper media coverage of climate change or global warming in print sources in seven different regions around the world, from January 2004 through September 2021.

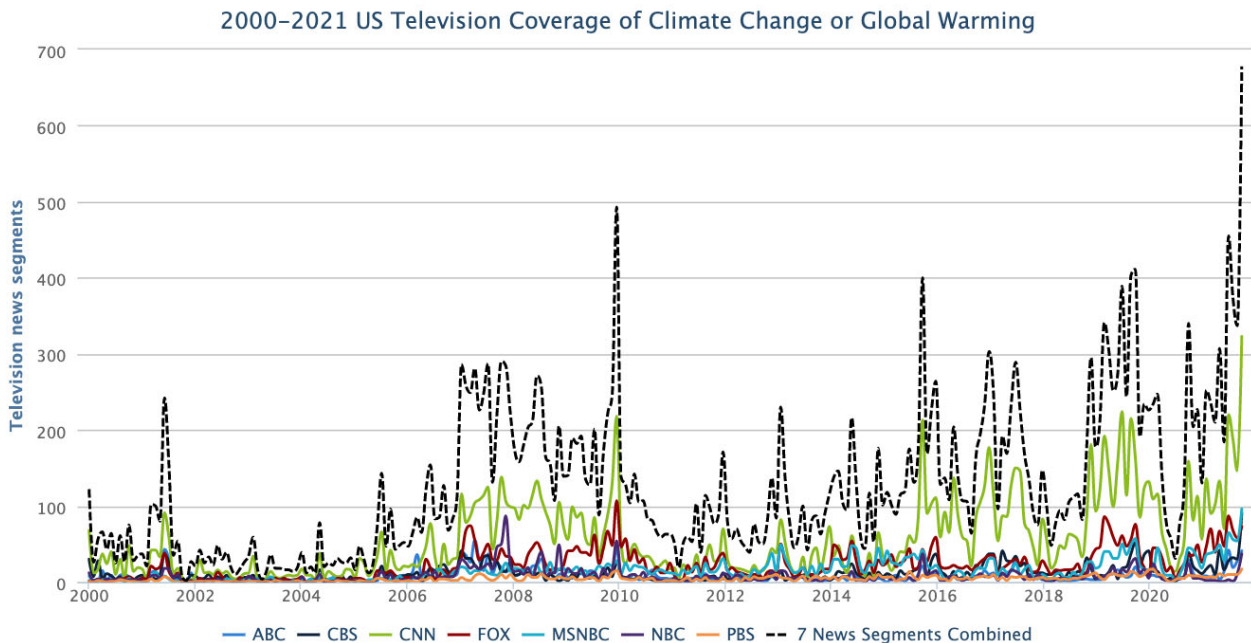


Figure 2. US television coverage of climate change or global warming from January 2000 through September 2021.

At the country level, United States (US) print coverage increased 11% while television coverage doubled from the previous month (see Figure 2).

In September, there were many *political* and *economic* themed media stories about climate change or global warming. To start, a *new report by the Atlantic Council* noted that historically marginalized racial/ethnic and socio-economic groups are found to be at the greatest risk to a changing climate. This report was also confirmed by a *US Environmental Protection Agency report* released the same day. For example, *CBS News* journalist *Cara Korte* reported, “Over the last 30 years, heat has caused more deaths than hurricanes, tornadoes and extreme cold combined. And if climate and demographic trends stay the same, by 2050, more than 59,000 people could die every year from heat, according to a new report from the Atlantic Council...As soon as 2030, experts say, excess heat could kill more than 8,500 people per year...And the socioeconomic ramifications of extreme heat are numerous and can compound in a domino effect. Those working outside or without air conditioning – such as agriculture or construction workers – require more breaks in extreme heat, causing their productivity to suffer. People who are physically uncomfortable

at work tend to make more mistakes. They’re also more likely to get sick or injured, forcing them to miss work or work through pain. Heat also contributes to mechanical stress, meaning machines break down and slow production. Interruptions in a professional life can do the same for a personal life. If someone is out of work due to injury or illness, not only are they possibly not getting paid, they’re accumulating medical costs. The groups most affected by this cycle, according to the report, are people of color”.

Also in September, news of US and EU pledges to reduce methane pollution drew media attention. For example, *Wall Street Journal* correspondents *Timothy Puko* and *Anthony Restuccia* reported, “President Biden said the U.S. is working with the European Union on a pledge to help cut global methane emissions by nearly a third by 2030, and he encouraged other countries to sign on to the effort. “This will not only rapidly reduce the rate of global warming, but it will also produce a very valuable side benefit, like improving public health and agricultural output,” Mr. Biden said Friday during remarks at the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, a long-dormant event that Mr. Biden revived ahead of United-Nations-led climate negotiations scheduled for November in Glasgow. The U.S. and the EU

issued a press release Saturday detailing the pledge. Other countries that have signed on are Argentina, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Mexico and the United Kingdom. The pledge would be the first global commitment to cut emissions of methane, a greenhouse gas less prevalent than carbon dioxide in the atmosphere but far more potent at trapping heat. Biden administration officials have been working for weeks to get the EU and others to sign on, focusing in particular on the world's largest economies and oil and gas producers".

Yet the main focus in September on political and economic stories relating to climate change were attached to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (and 'Climate Week') in New York City. Seen as the final large meeting of heads of state before the November UN climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, this was seen as an opportunity to draw attention to climate change awareness and action. Leading into the meeting, for example [Washington Post](#) journalists [Brady Dennis](#) and [Steven Mufson](#) reported, "As world leaders gather at the United Nations this week, they face no shortage of divisive issues: An ongoing global pandemic, economic strife on numerous continents, and conflict and human rights concerns from Afghanistan to Haiti. But with only six weeks left until a crucial global climate summit in Scotland, presidents and prime ministers also face pressure to set aside these diplomatic tensions and act quickly and collectively to slow the warming of the planet – something they have struggled to do in the past. "We have reached a tipping point on the need for climate action," U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres warned Thursday, in one of his latest pleas for unity and urgency. "The disruption to our climate and our planet is already worse than we thought, and it is moving faster than predicted... We must act now to prevent further irreversible damage." This week's U.N. General Assembly marks one of the last high-profile opportunities for countries to publicly commit to more ambitious, concrete action to cut greenhouse gas emissions ahead of November's climate summit in Glasgow. So far, such promises from some of the world's biggest

economies have failed to materialize, despite a full-court press from the Biden administration, the European Union and other advocates".

At the UN General Assembly, several media stories focused on how the US and China – the two biggest carbon polluters – discussed climate policy plans and actions. For example, [Associated Press](#) journalists [Seth Borenstein](#) and [Christina Larson](#) wrote, "The two biggest economies and largest carbon polluters in the world announced separate financial attacks on climate change Tuesday. Chinese President Xi Jinping said his country will no longer fund coal-fired power plants abroad, surprising the world on climate for the second straight year at the U.N. General Assembly. That came hours after U.S. President Joe Biden announced a plan to double financial aid to poorer nations to \$11.4 billion by 2024 so those countries could switch to cleaner energy and cope with global warming's worsening impacts. That puts rich nations close to within reach of its long-promised but not realized goal of \$100 billion a year in climate help for developing nations...This could provide some momentum going into major climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, in less than six weeks, experts said. Running up to the historic 2015 Paris climate deal, a joint U.S.-China agreement kickstarted successful negotiations. This time, with China-U.S. relations dicey, the two nations made their announcements separately, hours and thousands of miles apart".

Climate change or global warming elements shaping the German elections also made news stories across Europe in September. For example, journalists [Elena G. Sevillano](#) and [Luis Doncel](#) in a headline in the newspaper [El País](#): "Greens and liberals will have the key to form the next government". The climate issue has been an electoral issue that has been given relevance by all parties, except the ultra-conservatives".

September media accounts were punctuated by many [cultural](#) stories relating to climate change or global warming. To start the month, media covered several actions by medical professionals to draw attention to the changing climate. For example, [Guardian](#) journalist [Diane](#)

[Taylor reported](#), “Sixty doctors, nurses and other health professionals have staged a die-in protest outside JP Morgan’s Canary Wharf headquarters in London to highlight the bank’s investment in fossil fuels. The protest on Friday was organised by one of Extinction Rebellion’s groups, Doctors for Extinction Rebellion. The climate activist medics said this was their biggest protest so far and that JP Morgan was the biggest funder of coal, oil and gas extraction. The demonstration was part of a two-week series of XR protests against organisations supporting fossil fuels. The medics delivered a letter referring to the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and the International Energy Association’s “net zero by 2050” report”.

As a second example, media attention was paid to a statement by the editors of over 200 medical journals that called for immediate action to combat climate change. For example, [Wall Street Journal correspondent Robert Lee Hotz reported](#), “Editors of 220 leading medical, nursing and public-health journals from around the world called for urgent action on climate change, in a joint editorial published on Sunday. The editorial, which appeared in journals including the New England Journal of Medicine, the British Medical Journal and The Lancet, warns that current efforts aren’t enough to address health problems resulting from rising global temperatures caused by emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. “Health is already being harmed by global temperature increases and the destruction of the natural world,” the journals’ editors say in the editorial. If unchecked, they say, rising temperatures “risk catastrophic harm to health that will be impossible to reverse””.

In cultural arenas of religion, climate change stories arose in September as well. For instance, a joint statement by the heads of the Anglican Communion, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church focused on action to address climate change and social inequality. As an example of coverage, [Associated Press correspondent Nicole Winfield reported](#), “The world’s top Christian leaders – Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the spiritual leader

of Orthodox Christians – on Tuesday issued a joint appeal for delegates at the upcoming U.N. climate summit to “listen to the cry of the Earth” and make sacrifices to save the planet. In their first-ever joint statement, the three Christian clerics said the coronavirus pandemic gave political leaders an unprecedented opportunity to rethink the global economy and make it more sustainable and socially just for the poor... The statement was dated Sept. 1, when their churches celebrate the world day for the care of creation. There was no official explanation for why it was released a week late, though the Vatican is essentially closed for business in August, suggesting summer holidays might have been to blame. While the joint statement was a first, Francis has frequently cited Bartholomew’s teachings on the environment, including in his landmark 2015 environmental encyclical “Praised Be.” Welby, a former oil executive, has spoken out about the moral crisis of climate change though his Church of England has declined to divest fully from carbon-intensive companies arguing that it can force greater change on the fossil fuel industry as a shareholder”.

In the US in September – in cultural events associated with United Nations ‘Climate Week’ in New York City, there were media stories of how members of the entertainment community confronted climate change from late night comedy show platforms. For example, [journalist Jeff Berardelli from CBS News noted](#), “Climate change, which is responsible for magnifying this summer’s deadly heat waves, hurricanes, wildfires and floods, is typically no laughing matter. But for one night, seven popular late-night comedy shows hope they can change that. On Wednesday, September 22, the hosts are dedicating a portion of each of their shows to giving climate change a very unusual platform. The goal of the unprecedented, coordinated effort is to reach a wide audience and convey the seriousness of the challenge faced by humanity. CBS’ “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” and “The Late Late Show with James Corden,” ABC’s “Jimmy Kimmel Live!,” NBC’s “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” and “Late Night with Seth Meyers,” Comedy Central’s “The Daily Show with Trevor Noah” and TBS’ “Full Frontal with

Samantha Bee” are all participating in Climate Night”. As a second example, *New York Times* journalist Trish Bendix rounded up the shows, noting, “Seven late-night hosts came together for Climate Night on Wednesday, using their respective shows to raise awareness about climate change. “You can’t escape,” Jimmy Kimmel said in his monologue. “It’s basically an intervention”.

And around the world on Friday, September 24, ongoing youth climate strikes – reportedly more than 1,500 demonstrations across the planet – garnered media attention. For example, *CNN* journalists Rachel Ramirez, Angela Dewan, Aditi Sangal, Isabelle Jani-Friend, Melissa Mahtani and Meg Wagner reported, “The theme for today’s Global Climate Strike is “Uproot The System” which is meant to spotlight the most climate-vulnerable communities. Organizers say uprooting the system means addressing the historical legacies of injustice that exacerbate the most severe impacts of the climate crisis. Meanwhile, *New York Times* journalist Melissa Eddy noted, “Hundreds of thousands of young people around the world on Friday returned to the streets in the first global climate protest since the coronavirus pandemic forced them into lockdowns. Protesters gathered in Bangladesh, in Kenya, the Netherlands and in many other countries. But nowhere was the call to action more urgent than in Germany, where an estimated several hundred thousand people turned out in more than 400 cities, putting pressure on whoever wins a national election Sunday to put climate protection at the top of their agenda”.

A final illustration of media coverage of cultural elements of climate change or global warming was noted in Finland’s *Helsingin Sanomat* (see Figure 3). With the English-translated headline ‘Return to the Sun’, [this story by correspondent Anni Keski-Heikkilä](#) focused on travel restrictions associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

September media accounts about climate change or global warming were also populated by *ecological* and *meteorological* stories. To



Figure 3. *Helsingin Sanomat* (Finland) coverage of climate change on September 26 focusing on travel and climate change and tourism in Finland.

begin, hurricane Ida in the Caribbean – and its impacts on the US Gulf Coast in particular – drew media attention. Also, as the storm continued to move through the eastern US over the following days – causing flooding and other meteorological events – it garnered further media attention. For example, *Washington Post* correspondents María Luisa Paúl, Lateshia Beachum, Paulina Firozi, Mark Berman, Ben Guarino, Jason Samenow, Philip Bump, Jacob Bogage, Holly Bailey, Jaclyn Peiser and Will Oremus reported, “Three days after making landfall in Louisiana, the remnants of Hurricane Ida tore into the Northeast, where a historic deluge caused flooding that killed at least 44 people across New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. The barrage that ended Thursday did more than evoke harrowing memories of the region’s last deadly storm and leave cities at a standstill. For New York officials, the storm’s onslaught sounded the alarms for the need of aggressive moves to adapt to a changing climate”. Meanwhile, *New York Times* reporter Andy Newman noted, “Three days after

Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana, its weakened remnants tore into the Northeast and claimed at least 43 lives across New York, New Jersey and two other states in an onslaught that ended Thursday and served as an ominous sign of climate change's capacity to wreak new kinds of havoc".

In ecological developments, announcements from the US Fish and Wildlife Department about threatened and extinct species from climate change garnered headlines and stories. For example, [Associated Press correspondent Matthew Brown reported](#), "Death's come knocking a last time for the splendid ivory-billed woodpecker and 22 more birds, fish and other species: The U.S. government on Wednesday declared them extinct. It's a rare move for wildlife officials to give up hope on a plant or animal, but government scientists say they've exhausted to find these 23. And they warn climate change, on top of other pressures, could make such disappearances more common as a warming planet adds to the dangers facing imperiled plants and wildlife... Climate change is making species recovery harder, bringing drought, floods, wildfires and temperature swings that compound the threats species already faced".

Finally, many climate change or global warming stories in September remained focused on [scientific](#) themes. Among them, a new World Meteorological Organization report in early September examining weather- and climate-related disasters got media attention in several outlets. For example, [Associated Press journalists Seth Borenstein and Jamey Keaten reported](#), "Weather disasters are striking the world four to five times more often and causing seven times more damage than in the 1970s, the United Nations weather agency reports. But these disasters are killing far fewer people. In the 1970s and 1980s, they killed an average of about 170 people a day worldwide. In the 2010s, that dropped to about 40 per day, the World Meteorological Organization said in a report Wednesday that looks at more than 11,000 weather disasters in the past half-century. The report comes during a disaster-filled summer globally, including deadly floods in Germany

and a heat wave in the Mediterranean, and with the United States simultaneously struck by powerful Hurricane Ida and an onslaught of drought-worsened wildfires".

In a second example, news stories emanated from the release of a [Nature Climate Change study](#) assessing the world's remaining oil, coal and gas reserves in the context of a changing climate. For example, [CNN journalist Rachel Ramirez reported](#), "To avoid the worst consequences of climate change – worsening extreme weather, irreversible ecosystem shifts, loss of life and economic hardship – scientists say the world must limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The only way to do that, they say, is by making deep cuts to fossil fuel emissions. New research quantifies exactly what it would take: keeping a vast majority of Earth's remaining fossil fuels tucked underground. The study, published in the journal *Nature* on Wednesday, found that nearly 60% of the planet's remaining oil and natural gas and 90% of its coal reserves should remain in the ground by 2050, underscoring that most regions around the world must reach peak fossil fuel production now or within the next decade to avoid the critical climate threshold". As a second example, [Associated Press reporter Drew Costley noted](#), "Researchers who estimate how much of the world's coal, oil and natural gas reserves should be left unburned to slow the increase in climate-changing gases in the atmosphere say even more of these fossil fuels should be left in the ground...They now calculate that nearly 60% of the world's oil and gas reserves and 90% of the coal reserves need to stay in the ground by 2050 to meet climate goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. Those limits would give the world a 50-50 chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to pre-industrial times, according to their study".

Later in September, a [World Bank report](#) that found dire climate impacts on vulnerable human communities generated media attention. For example, [Associated Press correspondent Renata Brito reported](#), "Climate change could push more than 200 million people to leave



Thank you for your ongoing interest in the work we do through MeCCO. We remain committed to our work monitoring media coverage of these intersecting dimensions and themes associated with climate change.

**Our ongoing work is dependent on financial support
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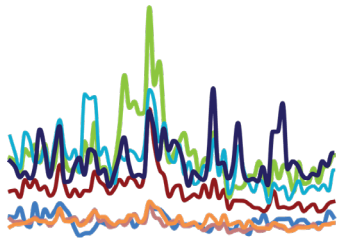
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their homes in the next three decades and create migration hot spots unless urgent action is taken to reduce global emissions and bridge the development gap, a World Bank report has found. The second part of the Groundswell report published Monday examined how the impacts of slow-onset climate change such as water scarcity, decreasing crop productivity and rising sea levels could lead to millions of what it describes as “climate migrants” by 2050 under three different scenarios with varying degrees of climate action and development. Under the most pessimistic scenario, with a high level of emissions and unequal development, the report forecasts up to 216 million people moving within their own countries across the six regions analyzed. Those regions are Latin America; North

Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa; Eastern Europe and Central Asia; South Asia; and East Asia and the Pacific. In the most climate-friendly scenario, with a low level of emissions and inclusive, sustainable development, the world could still see 44 million people being forced to leave their homes”.

Thanks for your ongoing interest in our Media and Climate Change Observatory (MeCCO) work monitoring media coverage of these intersecting dimensions and themes associated with climate change and global warming.

~ report prepared by Max Boykoff, Rogelio Fernández-Reyes, Jennifer Katzung, Jari Lyytimäki, Ami Nacu-Schmidt and Olivia Pearman



MeCCO

Media and Climate Change Observatory

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MeCCO monitors 127 sources (across newspapers, radio and TV) in 59 countries in seven different regions around the world. MeCCO assembles the data by accessing archives through the Nexis Uni, Proquest and Factiva databases via the University of Colorado libraries. 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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