

Explore the Stability Dimensions

Human stability does not fail in a single moment, nor through a single cause.

It erodes through interacting pressures that compound over time - often quietly - until thresholds are crossed.

The Human Stability Index is built around **seven foundational dimensions** that research, historical analysis, and contemporary risk assessment repeatedly associate with large-scale human instability. These dimensions are not treated as isolated indicators. They are tracked in parallel to reveal where pressures are reinforcing one another, where resilience exists, and where instability is likely to propagate next.

Together, they form a structured lens for observing how stable - or fragile - human systems are at regional and global scale.

1. Conflict and Security

This dimension captures exposure to organised violence, armed conflict, and systemic insecurity.

It includes both **active conflict** (interstate war, civil war, insurgency) and **latent security stress**, such as military escalation risk, internal unrest, terrorism, and state fragility. Importantly, it also considers the persistence of unresolved conflicts, not just their intensity.

Conflict acts as a destabilising force not only through direct harm, but through displacement, economic disruption, institutional breakdown, and long-term psychological and social damage. Regions with prolonged or unresolved security pressures often experience cascading effects across all other stability dimensions.

2. Economic Security

Economic security reflects the ability of individuals and households to meet basic needs and maintain predictable livelihoods.

This dimension incorporates factors such as income stability, employment conditions, inflation exposure, debt stress, cost-of-living pressures, and access to essential services. It also considers macro-level vulnerabilities - including fiscal strain, monetary tightening, and exposure to external shocks - insofar as they translate into lived economic insecurity.

Economic stress is a powerful amplifier of instability. When purchasing power erodes or employment becomes precarious, tolerance for political, social, and institutional strain declines rapidly.

3. Technological Disruption

This dimension captures the destabilising effects of rapid technological change, particularly where adoption outpaces governance, regulation, or social adaptation.

It includes exposure to automation-driven job displacement, uneven access to digital infrastructure, algorithmic labour management, and the societal impacts of artificial intelligence. It also considers information-system stress, including misinformation, disinformation, and erosion of trust in digital environments.

Technological disruption does not inherently reduce stability - but unmanaged transitions can generate sharp dislocation, especially when combined with weak economic security or low social trust.

4. Environmental Stress

Environmental stress measures exposure to climate-related and ecological pressures that undermine long-term habitability and security.

This includes acute events (heatwaves, floods, wildfires, droughts) as well as chronic degradation (water scarcity, land erosion, biodiversity loss). The Index tracks not only environmental hazards themselves, but the degree to which populations are exposed without adequate adaptive capacity.

Environmental stress rarely operates in isolation. It intensifies food insecurity, drives displacement, strains infrastructure, and increases the likelihood of conflict in already fragile regions.

5. Food Systems Stability

Food systems stability reflects the reliability, affordability, and accessibility of food supply.

This dimension incorporates food price volatility, supply chain disruption, dependency on imports, agricultural vulnerability, and nutritional access. It also considers the sensitivity of food systems to climate shocks, energy prices, and geopolitical trade restrictions.

Historically, food system disruption has been a consistent precursor to social unrest and political instability - particularly when combined with inflation and governance stress.

6. Public Safety and Institutional Capacity

This dimension captures the extent to which populations can rely on institutions to provide safety, justice, and basic public order.

It includes indicators related to crime prevalence, law enforcement capacity, judicial effectiveness, emergency response, and corruption exposure. Public safety is treated not only as physical protection, but as institutional reliability - the confidence that systems will function when needed.

Where public safety deteriorates, informal coping mechanisms often emerge, weakening formal institutions further and accelerating instability.

7. Social Cohesion

Social cohesion reflects the strength of shared norms, trust, and collective identity within societies.

This dimension includes measures of political polarisation, social fragmentation, trust in institutions, intergroup tension, and the prevalence of grievance narratives. It also considers the resilience of civic structures and the ability of societies to absorb disagreement without fracture.

Low social cohesion reduces a system's capacity to respond to shocks. Even moderate economic or environmental stress can trigger outsized instability when trust and legitimacy are already eroded.

How the Dimensions Work Together

These seven dimensions are **not additive checkboxes**. They are **interacting systems**.

Economic stress can heighten social polarisation.

Environmental shocks can destabilise food systems and drive conflict.

Technological disruption can weaken economic security and erode trust.

The Human Stability Index tracks these dimensions simultaneously to detect **compounding risk, early divergence, and adaptive capacity** - patterns that are often invisible when indicators are assessed in isolation.

This systems-based approach allows the Index to move beyond snapshot diagnosis and toward longitudinal understanding of how stability is gained, maintained, or lost.

From Dimensions to Measurement

Each dimension is operationalised through aggregated indicators drawn from credible international datasets and continuously updated sources. These indicators are standardised to enable comparison across regions and time, forming the basis of the Index's composite stability measure.

For a detailed explanation of how indicators are selected, weighted, and combined:

[→ See the index methodology](#)