

# The Global Risks Report 2025

## 20th Edition

INSIGHT REPORT



## Acknowledgement

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The report and an interactive data platform are available at <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/>.

# Key findings

The *Global Risks Report 2025* presents the findings of the **Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025 (GRPS)**, which captures insights from over 900 experts worldwide. The report analyses global risks through three timeframes to support decision-makers in balancing current crises and longer-term priorities. Chapter 1 explores current or immediate-term (in 2025) and short- to medium-term<sup>1</sup> (to 2027) risks, and Chapter 2 focuses on the risks emerging in the long term (to 2035). The report considers not only the survey findings and the range of implications, but also provides six in-depth analyses of selected risk themes.

Below are the key findings of the report, in which we compare the risk outlooks across the three time horizons.

## Declining optimism

As we enter 2025, the global outlook is increasingly fractured across geopolitical, environmental, societal, economic and technological domains. Over the last year we have witnessed the expansion and escalation of conflicts, a multitude of extreme weather events amplified by climate change, widespread societal and political polarization, and continued technological advancements accelerating the spread of false or misleading information. Optimism is limited as the danger of miscalculation or misjudgment by political and military actors

is high. We seem to be living in one of the most divided times since the Cold War, and this is reflected in the results of the **GRPS**, which reveal a bleak outlook across all three time horizons – current, short-term and long-term.

A majority of respondents (52%) anticipate an unsettled global outlook over the short term (next two years), a similar proportion to last year (Figure A). Another 31% expect turbulence and 5% a stormy outlook. Adding together these three categories of responses shows a combined four percentage point increase from last year, indicating a heightened pessimistic outlook for the world to 2027.

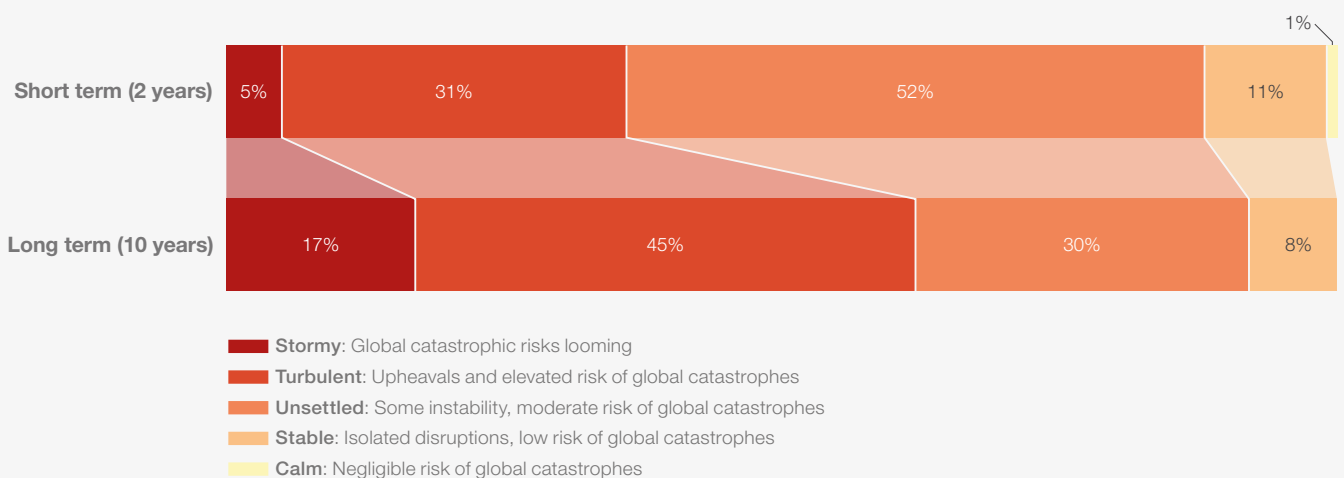
Compared to this two-year outlook, the landscape deteriorates over the 10-year timeframe, with 62% of respondents expecting stormy or turbulent times. This long-term outlook has remained similar to the survey results last year, in terms of its level of negativity, reflecting respondent skepticism that current societal mechanisms and governing institutions are capable of navigating and mending the fragility generated by the risks we face today.

## Deepening geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions

Comparing this year's findings for the world in 2025 with the two-year risk outlook provided by the **GRPS** two years ago shows how far

FIGURE A Short- and long-term global outlook

"Which of the following best characterizes your outlook for the world over the following time periods?"



Source  
World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey  
2024-2025

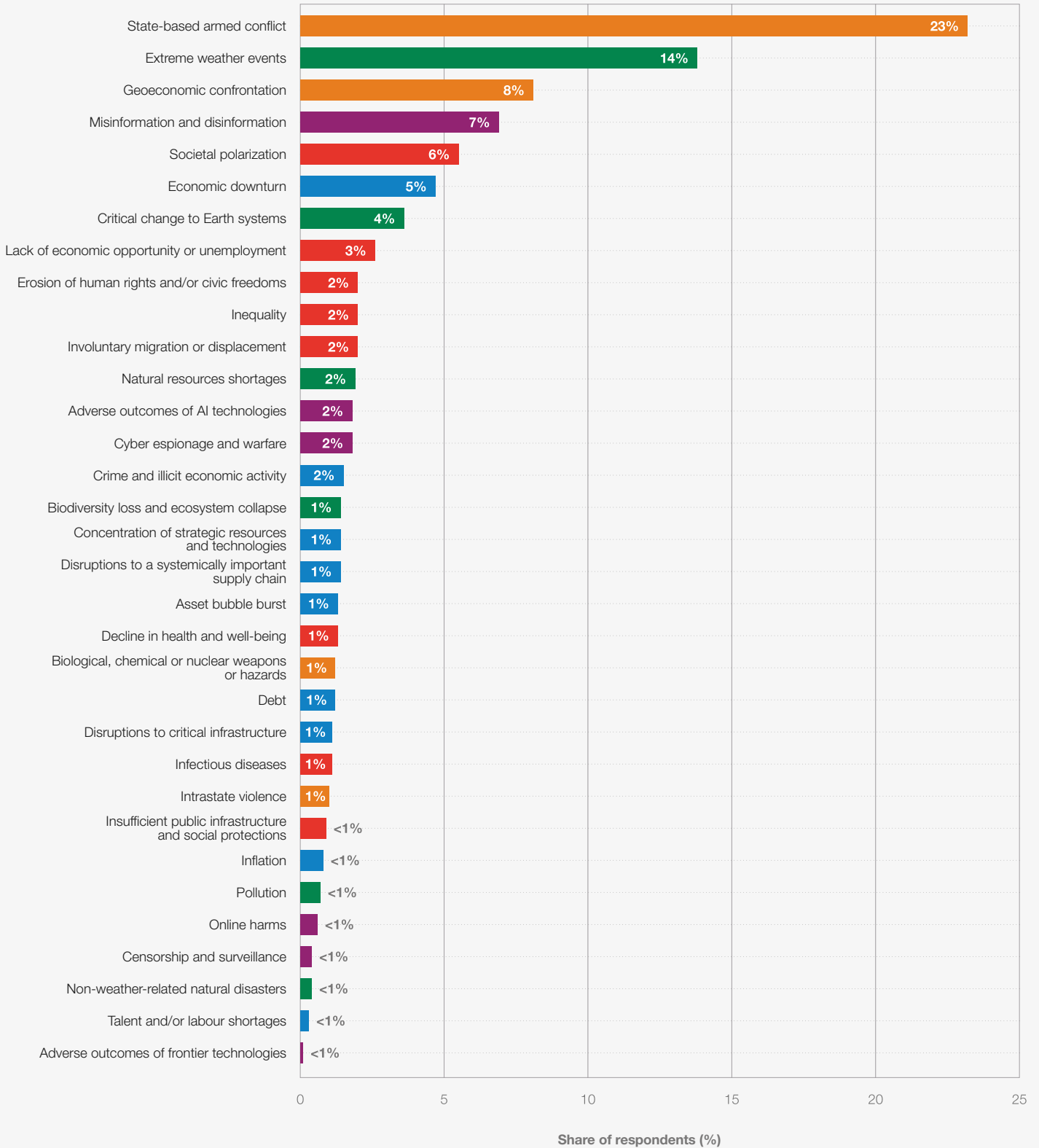
Note  
The percentages in the graph may not add up to 100% because values have been rounded up/down.

perceptions have darkened when it comes to conflict. **State-based armed conflict**, now ranked as the #1 current risk by 23% of respondents (Figure B), was overlooked as a leading two-year risk two years ago.

In a world that has seen an increasing number of armed conflicts over the last decade,<sup>2</sup> national security considerations are starting to dominate government agendas. **Section 1.3: "Geopolitical recession"** dives deep into the dangers of

**FIGURE B** Current Global Risk Landscape

"Please select one risk that you believe is most likely to present a material crisis on a global scale in 2025."



Source  
World Economic Forum Global Risks  
Perception Survey 2024-2025.

Risk categories | Economic | Environmental | Geopolitical | Societal | Technological

unilateralism taking hold in national security considerations and highlights the worsening humanitarian impacts of the ongoing conflicts.

The risk of further destabilizing consequences following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as in the Middle East and in Sudan are likely to be amplifying respondents' concerns beyond 2025 as well. In the two-year outlook, **State-based armed conflict** has moved up from #5 to #3 since our **GRPS 2023-24** (Figure C).

**Section 1.4: Supercharged economic tensions** explores how global geoeconomic tensions could unfold. The rise in the two-year ranking of **Geoeconomic confrontation**, from #14 last year to #9 today reflects unease about the path ahead for global economic relations. The role of technology in geopolitical tensions also concerns respondents, with **Cyber espionage and warfare** ranked #5 in the two-year outlook.

However, the top risk in 2027 is **Misinformation and disinformation**, for the second year in a row (Figure C). There are many ways in which a proliferation of false or misleading content is complicating the geopolitical environment. It is a leading mechanism for foreign entities to affect voter intentions; it can sow doubt among the general public worldwide about what is happening in conflict zones; or it can be used to tarnish the image of products or services from another country.

## A growing sense of societal fragmentation

Societal fractures are central to the overall risks landscape, as shown in the risk interconnections map (Figure D). **Inequality** (wealth, income) is

perceived as the most central risk of all, playing a significant role in both triggering and being influenced by other risks. It is contributing to weakening trust and diminishing our collective sense of shared values.

As well as **Inequality**, other societal risks also feature in the top 10 of the two-year ranking: **Societal polarization, Involuntary migration or displacement** and **Erosion of human rights and/or civic freedoms**. The importance ascribed to this set of societal risks by respondents suggests that social stability will be fragile over the next two years.

Respondent concern around certain key economic risks – **Economic downturn** and **Inflation** – has subsided since last year, with these two risks witnessing the largest falls in the two-year ranking (Figure 1.5). Nonetheless, the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis since 2022 contributed to **Inequality** becoming the top interconnected risk this year: **Economic downturn, Inflation, and Debt** were selected among the top causes of **Inequality** by **GRPS** respondents.

Although there are fewer societal risks in the top 10 of the 10-year risk ranking than in the top 10 of the two-year risk ranking (two compared to four, see Figure C), the profound societal fractures that feature prominently in this report should not be perceived as solely short-term risks. Looking ahead to the next decade, **Inequality** and **Societal polarization** continue to feature among the top 10 risks. This is an important pair of risks to watch, given how related they can be to bouts of social instability, and in turn to domestic political and to geostrategic volatility. In super-ageing societies – such as Japan, South Korea, Italy or Germany – unfavourable demographic trends could accentuate these risks over the next 10 years. Pensions crises and labour shortages in the long-term care

FIGURE C

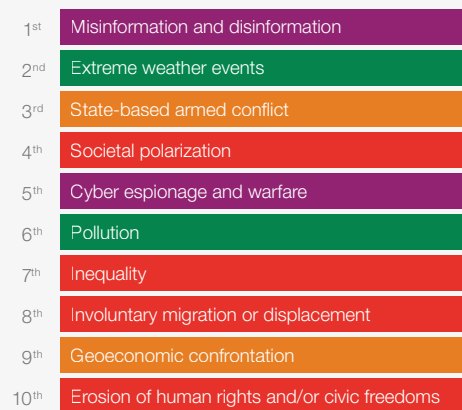
### Global risks ranked by severity over the short and long term

"Please estimate the likely impact (severity) of the following risks over a 2-year and 10-year period."

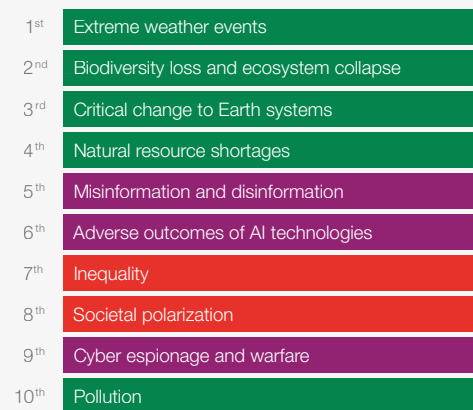
Risk categories

- Economic
- Environmental
- Geopolitical
- Societal
- Technological

2 years



10 years



Source

World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025.

sector are likely to become acute and widespread problems in super-ageing societies, with no easy fix for governments. [Section 2.5: Super-ageing societies](#) explores this risk theme.

## Environmental risks - from long-term concern to urgent reality

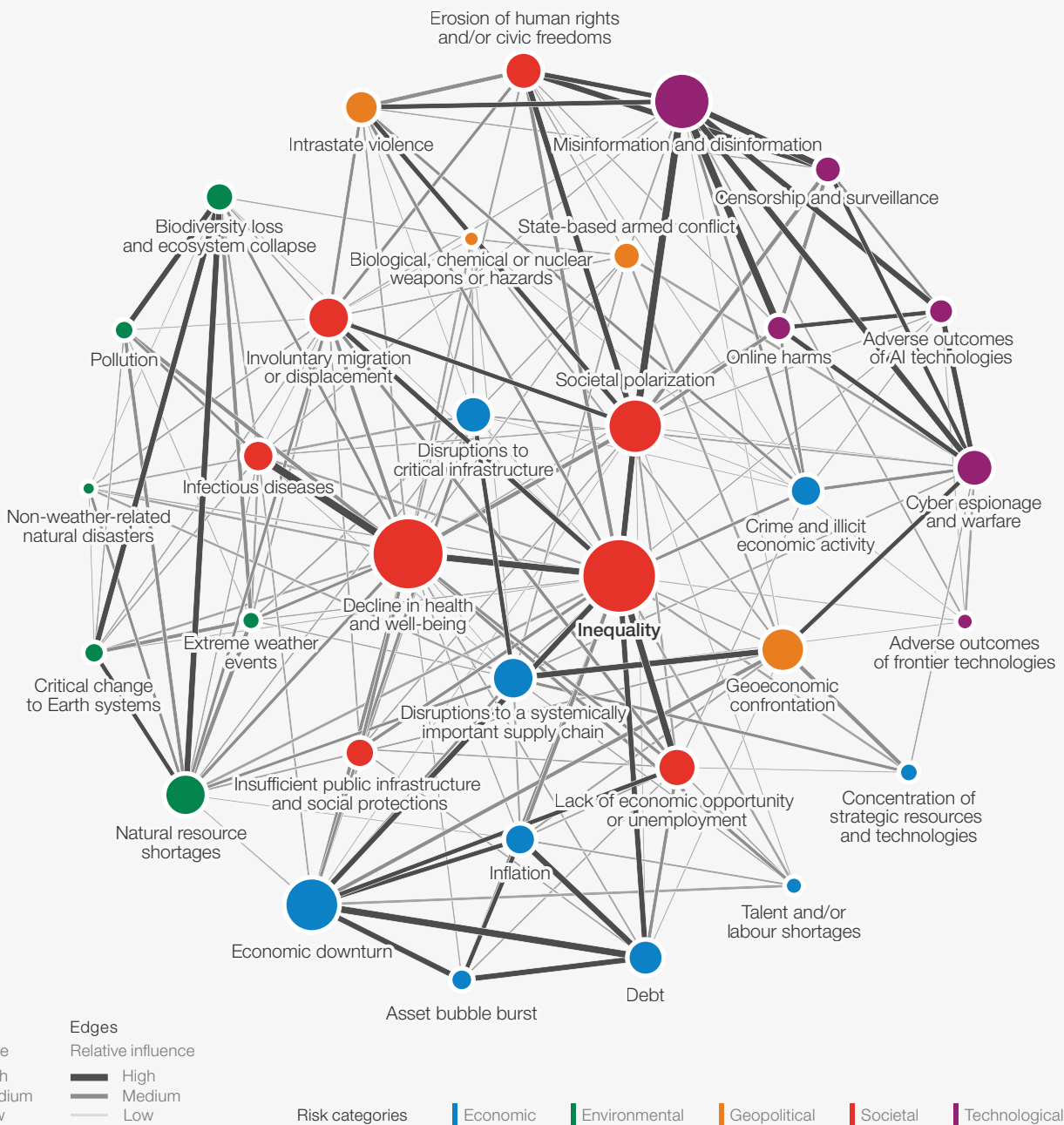
The impacts of environmental risks have worsened in intensity and frequency since the *Global Risks Report* was launched in 2006, as discussed in depth in [Section 2.6: Looking back: 20 years of the Global Risks Report](#). Moreover, the outlook

for environmental risks over the next decade is alarming – while all 33 risks in the **GRPS** are expected to worsen in severity (Figure E) from the two-year to the 10-year time horizon, environmental risks present the most significant deterioration.

**Extreme weather events** are anticipated to become even more of a concern than they already are, with this risk being top ranked in the 10-year risk list for the second year running. **Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse** ranks #2 over the 10-year horizon, with a significant deterioration compared to its two-year ranking.

The **GRPS** shows generational divergence when it comes to risk perceptions related to environmental

FIGURE D Global risks landscape: An interconnections map<sup>3</sup>



Source  
World Economic Forum Global Risks  
Perception Survey 2024-2025



issues, with younger survey respondents being more concerned about this over the next 10 years than older age groups. Take **Pollution**, for example, which the under 30s rank as the #3 most severe risk in 2035, the highest of any age group surveyed. As noted in last year's *Global Risks Report*, there is also divergence in how **Pollution** is ranked by stakeholder, with the public sector placing **Pollution** as a top 10 risk in the 10-year ranking, but not the private sector (Figure 2.4). **Section 2.3: Pollution at a crossroads** aims to fill awareness gaps by exploring under-appreciated pollutant risks that need to become more prominent in policy agendas by 2035 – and ideally much sooner given their significant impacts on health and ecosystems.

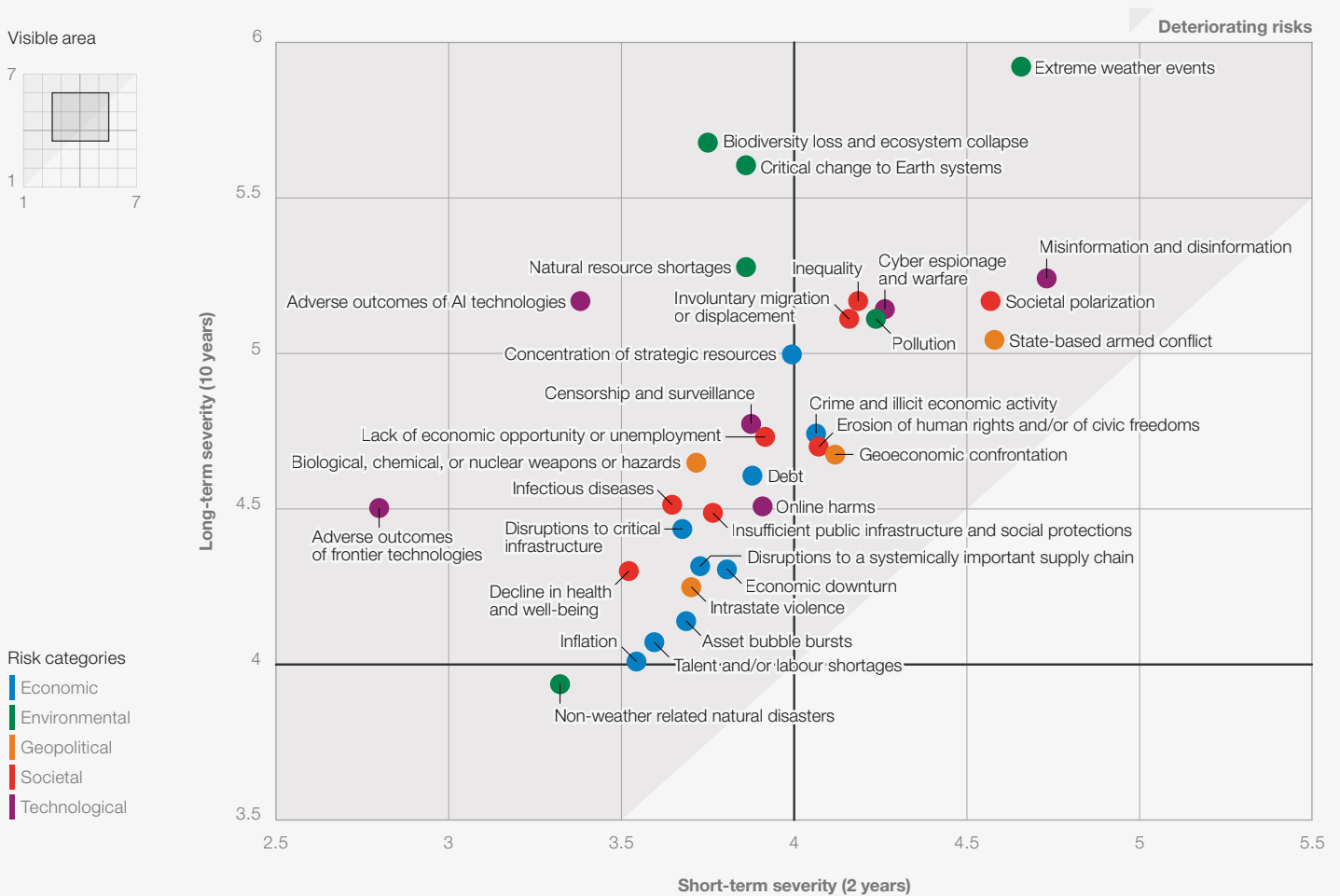
## Technological risks - still “under the radar”

In a year that has seen considerable experimentation by companies and individuals in making the best use of AI tools, concerns about **Adverse outcomes of AI technologies** are low in the risk ranking on a two-

year outlook. However, complacency around the risks of such technologies should be avoided given the fast-paced nature of change in the field of AI and its increasing ubiquity. Indeed, **Adverse outcomes of AI technologies** is one of the risks that climbs the most in the 10-year risk ranking compared to the two-year risk ranking (Figure G). In this report we highlight the role of Generative AI (GenAI) in producing false or misleading content at scale, and how that relates to societal polarization. **Section 1.5: Technology and polarization** explores this and the broader risks from greater connectivity, rapid growth in computing power and more powerful AI tools.

Among the areas experiencing the most rapid technological advances is the Biotech sector. **Section 2.4: Losing control of biotech?** takes an in-depth look at emerging risks in biotech, supercharged by AI. Over a 10-year time horizon, low-probability, high-impact risks exist, including **Intrastate violence** from biological terrorism and **Adverse outcomes of frontier technologies** involving accidental or malicious misuse of gene editing technologies, or even of brain-computer interfaces. At the same time, such risks do not

FIGURE E Relative severity of global risks over a 2- and 10-year period



Source  
World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey  
2024-2025.

Note  
Severity was assessed on a 1-7 Likert scale [1 = Low severity, 7 = High severity].

diminish the tremendous actual and potential progress for humankind stemming from biotech.

## The time to act is now - is consensus possible in a fragmenting world?

Deepening divisions and increasing fragmentation are reshaping international relations and calling into question whether existing structures are equipped to tackle the challenges collectively confronting us. Levels of global cooperation across many areas of geopolitics and humanitarian issues, economic relations, and environmental, societal and technological challenges may reach new lows in the coming years. Key countries appear to be turning inward, focusing on mounting domestic economic or societal concerns, just when they should be seeking to strengthen multilateral ties to confront shared challenges.

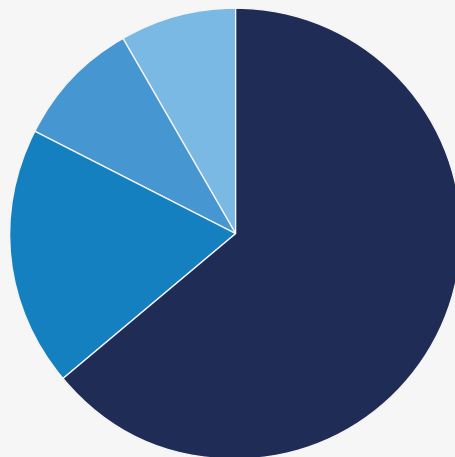
When asked about the characteristics of the global political outlook over the next decade, 64% of GRPS respondents believe that we will face a **Multipolar or fragmented order**, in which middle and great powers contest, set and enforce regional rules and norms (Figure F). Perceptions in response to this question have changed little compared to last year. The Western-led global order is expected to continue its decline over the next decade but will nonetheless remain an importance locus of power. Alternative power centres are likely to strengthen, not just led by China, but also by key emerging powers, including India and the Gulf states.

The decade ahead will be pivotal as leaders will be confronted with increasingly complex global risks. But to prevent a downward spiral in which citizens worldwide will be worse off than before, ultimately there is no option other than to find avenues for dialogue and collaboration.<sup>4</sup>

FIGURE F

### Global political outlook

"Which of the following best characterizes the global political environment for cooperation on global risks in 10 years?"



- 64%** Multipolar or fragmented order in which middle and great powers contest, set, and enforce regional rules and norms
- 19%** Bipolar or bifurcated order shaped by strategic competition between two superpowers
- 9%** Realignment towards a new international order led by an alternative superpower
- 8%** Continuation or reinvigoration of the US-led, rules-based international order

#### Source

World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025



FIGURE G

Global risks ranked by severity over the short and long term

"Please estimate the likely impact (severity) of the following risks over a 2-year and 10-year period."

Short term (2 years)

1 <sup>st</sup>	Misinformation and disinformation
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Extreme weather events
3 <sup>rd</sup>	State-based armed conflict
4 <sup>th</sup>	Societal polarization
5 <sup>th</sup>	Cyber espionage and warfare
6 <sup>th</sup>	Pollution
7 <sup>th</sup>	Inequality
8 <sup>th</sup>	Involuntary migration or displacement
9 <sup>th</sup>	Geoeconomic confrontation
10 <sup>th</sup>	Erosion of human rights and/or of civic freedoms
11 <sup>th</sup>	Crime and illicit economic activity
12 <sup>th</sup>	Concentration of strategic resources
13 <sup>th</sup>	Lack of economic opportunity or unemployment
14 <sup>th</sup>	Online harms
15 <sup>th</sup>	Debt
16 <sup>th</sup>	Censorship and surveillance
17 <sup>th</sup>	Critical change to Earth systems
18 <sup>th</sup>	Natural resource shortages
19 <sup>th</sup>	Economic downturn
20 <sup>th</sup>	Insufficient public infrastructure and social protections
21 <sup>st</sup>	Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Disruptions to a systemically important supply chain
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Biological, chemical or nuclear hazards
24 <sup>th</sup>	Intrastate violence
25 <sup>th</sup>	Asset bubble bursts
26 <sup>th</sup>	Disruptions to critical infrastructure
27 <sup>th</sup>	Infectious diseases
28 <sup>th</sup>	Talent and/or labour shortages
29 <sup>th</sup>	Inflation
30 <sup>th</sup>	Decline in health and well-being
31 <sup>st</sup>	Adverse outcomes of AI technologies
32 <sup>nd</sup>	Non-weather related natural disasters
33 <sup>rd</sup>	Adverse outcomes of frontier technologies

Long term (10 years)

1 <sup>st</sup>	Extreme weather events
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Critical change to Earth systems
4 <sup>th</sup>	Natural resource shortages
5 <sup>th</sup>	Misinformation and disinformation
6 <sup>th</sup>	Adverse outcomes of AI technologies
7 <sup>th</sup>	Inequality
8 <sup>th</sup>	Societal polarization
9 <sup>th</sup>	Cyber espionage and warfare
10 <sup>th</sup>	Pollution
11 <sup>th</sup>	Involuntary migration or displacement
12 <sup>th</sup>	State-based armed conflict
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33 <sup>rd</sup>	Non-weather related natural disasters

Source

World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey 2024-2025

Risk categories

- Economic
- Environmental
- Geopolitical
- Societal
- Technological

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