

Disasters triggered 225 million internal displacements across Asia and Pacific region between 2010 - 2021

From Pakistan to the Philippines, Asia and Pacific is the region most affected by disaster displacement worldwide, according to a new report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

New figures show that 225 million internal displacements, or forced movements within borders, were triggered by disasters between 2010 and 2021. This represents an annual average of 18.8 million, or more than three-quarters of the global total of displacements during this period.

Weather-related hazards such as floods, tropical storms and monsoon rains, were responsible for 95 per cent of all disaster displacements across the region. Floods triggered the most, with 113.6 million movements, or 50% of the total. As urbanisation and infrastructure development increase, so too will the risk of flood displacement. This could have grave consequences for communities, as seen in Pakistan where more than 33 million people have been affected by record-breaking pre-monsoon flooding.

"Asia and the Pacific is the world's most rapidly urbanising region, and the expansion of cities in disaster-prone areas increases people's exposure to displacement," said IDMC's Global Monitoring and Reporting Manager, Vicente Anzellini. "As the intensity and frequency of disasters are expected to increase, people uprooted from home will have less time to recover, potentially trapping them in cycles of prolonged or repeated displacement."

The People's Republic of China, the Philippines and India recorded the highest numbers of forced movements, yet it is Pacific island countries who bear the greatest displacement risk relative to their population size. One metre of sea-level rise in Kiribati, for example, could inundate two-thirds of the country, forcing entire communities to relocate.

The cost of disasters in the region is estimated to be several hundred billions of dollars each year, and this does not include the economic impact of displacement itself. Financial costs and losses weigh disproportionately on those with limited resources.

"While displacement often demands a humanitarian response, it is first and foremost a development issue," said Noelle O'Brien, ADB's Chief of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management Group. "It disrupts and erodes the development gains of affected communities and can have an impact on their longer-term stability and resilience to future shocks."

Significant progress has been made across the region to develop policies that address disaster displacement, align them with globally agreed upon frameworks, and provide comprehensive and inclusive support to those uprooted. Much remains to be done, however, to successfully mitigate the impacts on individuals, societies and economies.

"Global efforts should be focused on reducing displacement risk and supporting durable solutions for those affected by disasters and the effects of climate change," said IDMC's Director, Alexandra Bilak. "Robust data on the scale, duration and severity of displacement will help guide future action, and critical knowledge and expertise can be shared with improved regional collaboration."

ADB's Noelle O'Brien added: "Investment in sustainable development, local resilience-building, disaster risk reduction, and climate adaptation to prevent internal displacement will be far more effective and less costly than relying on international humanitarian aid in the long-term."

Notes to editors

Visit our landing page to download the report and explore the data: www.internal-displacement.org/disaster-displacement-in-asia-and-the-pacific-2022

A selection of images and infographics are available upon request.

About IDMC:

Every day, people flee conflict and disasters and become displaced inside their own countries. IDMC, established in 1998 as part of the Norwegian Refugee Council, provides data and analysis and supports partners in identifying and implementing solutions to internal displacement.

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