BANGLADESH

Figure Analysis – Displacement Related to Disasters

SUMMARY OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN 2019

With more than 4 million recorded displacements in 2019, Bangladesh had the highest number of forced movements associated with disasters since the IDMC began collecting data on such displacement in 2008. These figures stand out compared with 2018, when there were 78,000 new displacements, 2017, with 946,000, 2016 with 614,000, and 2015 with 531,000. The surge is mainly a result of an increase in life-saving evacuations, which were carried out in 2019 because of Tropical Cyclone Fani on 4 May, with 1.7 million evacuations, and Tropical Cyclone Bulbul in November with 2.1 million evacuations.

Tropical Cyclone Fani hit Bangladesh with a speed of about 90 kilometres an hour to 110 kilometres an hour. This constituted a weakening in wind speed from about 180 kilometres an hour to 190 kilometres an hour when it hit India shortly before, but the cyclone generated significant damage, including to houses and crops in coastal districts. The annual south-west monsoon season officially started the following month, in June, but had no significant displacement impact until after 7 July, when monsoon rain and water triggered inundations in low-lying areas of north and north-eastern Bangladesh. Compared to other monsoon flooding, this year's inundation was intense, but not geographically widespread. It featured all three types of flooding prevalent in Bangladesh: monsoon flooding, flash floods, and water logging. These occurred simultaneously in three different parts of the country.

The second major tropical cyclone, Bulbul, struck Bangladesh on 9 November 2019. It remained in the country for about 36 hours, making it one of the longest lasting cyclones in more than five decades. Bangladesh's mangrove forest, however, reduced Bulbul's wind speed from 148 kilometres an hour to 130 kilometres an hour, protecting people living in mangrove areas. Equally, if not more, important was Bangladesh's life-saving early warning system, considered among the most successful globally.

Aid organisations report that the cumulative damage from the many storms in Bangladesh is eroding resilience, increasing the losses and damages associated with meteorological disasters such as Bulbul. More preventative evacuations are an efficient disaster risk mitigation measure. Greater attention, however, should be focused on the disasters' long-term effects.

Table 1. 2019 summary of internal displacement in Bangladesh

Number of events that triggered displacements[1]	14
Total new displacements[2]	4,086,000
Estimated IDPs as of 31 December 2019[3]	88,000
Houses destroyed[4]	64,615
People pre-emptively evacuated before events[5]	3,773,000
People officially sheltered after events[6]	N/A

Notes

[1] *This corresponds to the number of disaster events that triggered displacement during 2019*
[2] *This corresponds to new instances of total internal displacement related to the disaster event during the year*
[3] *This corresponds to the total number of individuals living in a situation of internal displacement as of 31 December 2019 as a result of the disaster event*
[4] *This corresponds to the number of houses destroyed during the year*
[5] *This corresponds to the number of people that have been detected as pre-emptively evacuated before the disaster events*
[6] *This corresponds to the total number of people that have been sheltered following the disasters events*

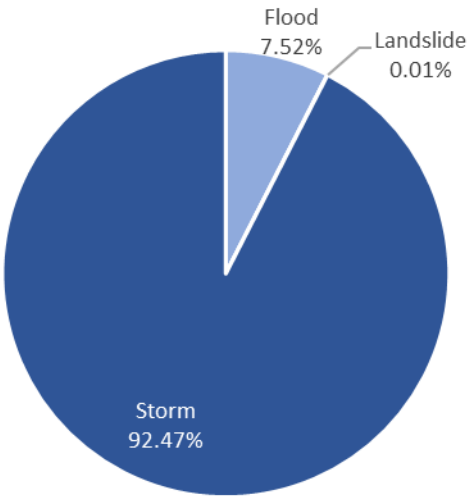
Bangladesh experienced storms, floods and wet and dry mass movements that triggered displacement. Beyond the monsoon season and Tropical Cyclones Fani and Bulbul, small-scale disasters generated about 5,600 displacements throughout the year. IDMC's estimate of the total number of displacements triggered by disasters in Bangladesh is conservative. It consists of about 8,000 people displaced as a result of riverbank erosion that destroyed their houses during the 2019 monsoon, up to 34,000 people permanently displaced by riverbank erosion in 2018, and about 60 people who continue to be displaced in makeshift shelters in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as of June 2019, because of the 2017 landsides.

The lack of comprehensive longitudinal data at the national level makes it likely that IDMC's estimate of the total number of people internally displaced as a result of disasters would be an underestimate. Bangladesh also has had significant climate change-related 'migration' in recent years. An unknown proportion of these 'migrants' may be de-facto IDPs. IDMC, however, cannot reliably estimate the share of the climate change migrants who fulfil the IDP definition owing to a lack of assessments on the forced versus voluntary nature of these movements and the generally low reliability of data related to this phenomenon.

New Displacement in 2019 by hazard type

The bulk of displacements triggered by disasters in 2019 were triggered by storms. This reflects the fact that Tropical Cyclone Fani and Tropical Cyclone Bulbul led to about 1,666,043 and 2,106,918 evacuations respectively. Riverbank erosion and wet mass movements, although generating smaller numbers of movements, probably led to a greater share of permanent and long-term displacements.

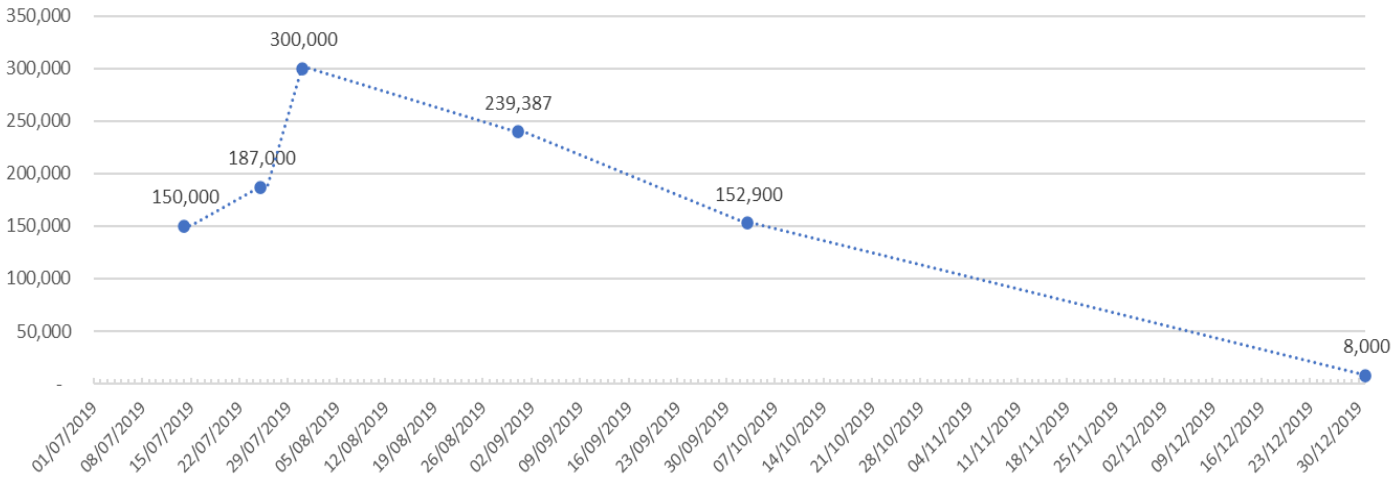
Fig. 1. Distribution of new displacements by hazard types in Bangladesh in 2019



Duration of displacement

A data gap exists on the duration of displacement following disasters in Bangladesh. This is a result of the lack of systematic, longitudinal collection of primary data on displacement by national agencies and NGOs. The time-series data that IDMC has collected on disaster-related displacement in Bangladesh is likely to underestimate the scale of long-term displacement. The figure below illustrates temporal trends in displacement because of the monsoon, but it may underestimate the number of people remaining displaced at the end of the year. This is because IDMC's year-end estimate only includes about 8,000 people who lost their housing permanently as a result of riverbank erosion.

Figure 2: Trends of people living in a situation of internal displacement in 2019 following the south-west monsoon



This chart illustrates the estimated duration of displacement following the south-west monsoon in Bangladesh in 2019, which had its onset in June and withdrew in September. Large-scale displacement as a result of the monsoon took place in July. The displacement had a slow onset, with small-scale

displacement reported from 7 July. The first country-wide displacement, however, is estimated for 14 July. It is based on the number of people targeted for tent distributions by the Ministry for Disaster Management and Relief. As of 25 July, 187,000 people are estimated to have been displaced. The displacement peaked at the very end of the month, when about 300,000 are estimated to have been displaced across the country. Of these, more than 157,000 were displaced in two districts in Rangpur division: Gaibandha and Kurgram. More than 240,000 people are estimated to have been still displaced in makeshift shelters or on embankments in August. Reports by the Red Crescent Movement indicate that as of early October as many as 153,000 people were still homeless or in need of shelter in Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions. By December, humanitarian actors reported that the displacement had ended. IDMC estimates, however, that about 8,000 still remained displaced because their houses, in Rangpur, Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions, were destroyed as a result of riverbank erosion.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The main sources used to calculate the number of new displacements associated with disasters, including housing destruction, in Bangladesh in 2019, are the Needs Assessment Working Group - an NGO consortium led by the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE), for large disasters, and the Network for Information Response and Preparedness Activities on Disaster (NIRAPAD), a non-governmental research organisation gathering and disseminating disaster information, for smaller disaster events. Both organisations report data collected by the National Disaster Response Coordination Center (NDRCC), the government agency managing data collection on disaster loss and damage. IDMC also monitors media reports on displacement, as well as situation reports published by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), CARE, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO). Of about 285 “facts” recorded on displacement in 2019 – individual estimates for specific locations and points of time – 268 were used for triangulation.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

First, language barriers make it more difficult for IDMC to verify and triangulate displacement data reported by international organisations and the government. Previous efforts to work with UN volunteers in Bangladesh to overcome such challenges resulted in little or no increase in the displacement detected, but language barriers may still have contributed to knowledge gaps.

Second, IDMC has been unable to access a full breakdown of the number of new displacements and housing destruction per location/over time for Tropical Cyclone Fani and Tropical Cyclone Bulbul. Not only does this limit IDMC’s ability to do a deeper analysis of the displacement impact of these events, it also limits our ability to use triangulation to verify the reported figures for these events.

Third, IDMC believes that its displacement estimates for small-scale disasters are likely to be underestimates. This is because the absence of an infrastructure for the collection of comprehensive displacement data following smaller disasters in Bangladesh makes reliable figures hard to come by. Floods and storms often lead to reports of marooned people or housing damage, but without reliable displacement estimates. IDMC’s figures also do not encompass climate-related migration in Bangladesh.

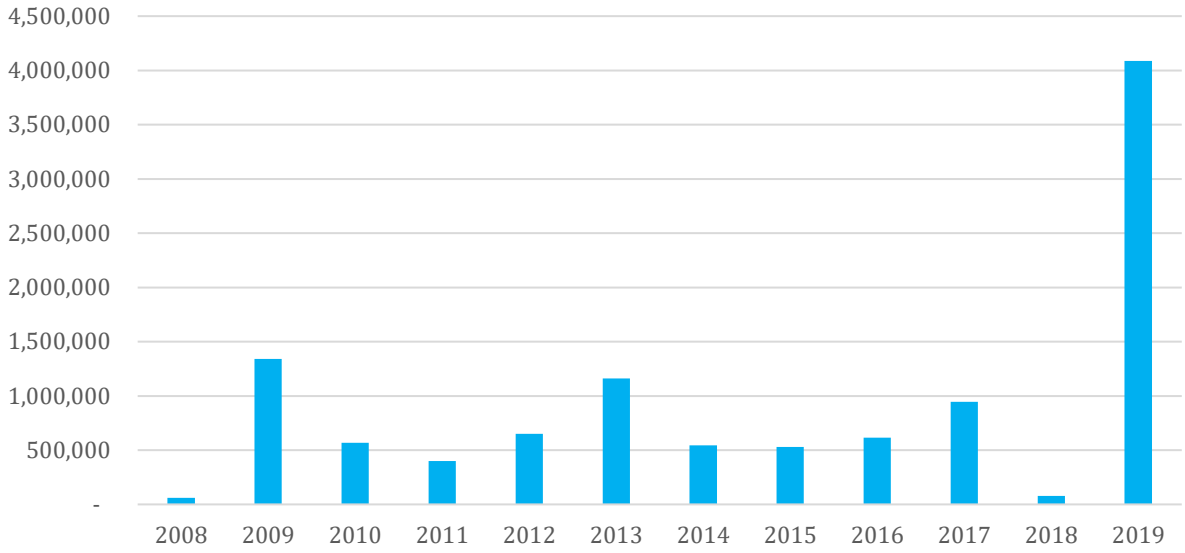
This is often triggered by slow-onset disasters that erode people's resilience or access to livelihood in their areas of habitual residence and takes place gradually throughout the year. One such type of disaster is riverbank erosion. IDMC's figure includes large-scale instances of displacement resulting from riverbank erosion, but small-scale instances affecting single households are rarely if ever recorded.

CONTEXT

IDMC's disaster risk model estimates that, on average, more than 1.2 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of disasters in Bangladesh in any given year. This estimate takes into account Bangladesh's vulnerability to disasters and its population's exposure to such hazards. IDMC's data for 2019, however, indicates that the annual number of displacement movements in the country may increase more than previously estimated. Bangladesh this year was among the countries with the biggest increase in such movements relative to previous years. It is important to recognise that this trend is mainly the effect of significant pre-emptive evacuations ahead of Tropical Cyclones Fani and Bulbul. At the same time, 2019 was a year of intense disasters in Bangladesh. These contributed to additional humanitarian impacts and economic losses related to displacement. Better data is needed to map the link between sudden-onset events and climate-related disaster on the one hand, and temporary evacuations and permanent displacement on the other.

Trends analysis 2008-2019

Fig 3. Historical displacement trends in Bangladesh



For the full country profile on Bangladesh please visit:
http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/bangladesh