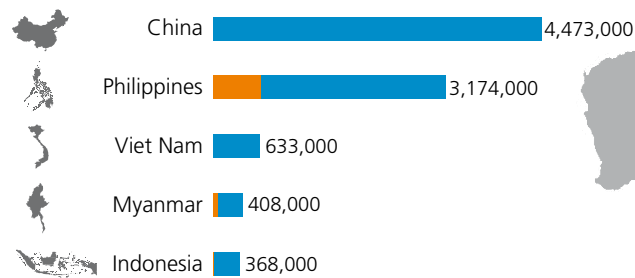


EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC



DISASTERS 45.8%
CONFLICT 6%
OF THE GLOBAL
TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict and disasters)



Sudden-onset disasters triggered most of the internal displacement recorded in East Asia and Pacific in 2017. This is not surprising given that the region is the most disaster-prone in the world. Disasters displaced 8.6 million people during the year, accounting for 46 per cent of the global total. **China**, the **Philippines** and **Viet Nam** were among the ten worst-affected countries in the world, with 4.5 million, 2.5 million and 633,000 new displacements respectively. **Indonesia** and **Myanmar** ranked 12th and 13th with 365,000 and 351,000.

The region is affected by both intensive (less frequent but high-impact) and extensive (recurrent but lower impact) events.¹¹⁸ Our disaster displacement risk model estimates that sudden-onset disasters are likely to displace an average of more than 1.3 million people in **China**, more than a million in **Viet Nam** and more than 700,000 in the **Philippines** during any given year in the future. Across the region as a whole the prospective figure is five million. Thirty-six per cent of global disaster displacement risk is concentrated in East Asia and Pacific, more than any other region.¹¹⁹ Flooding is the most common and recurring natural hazard and claims most victims.¹²⁰

The Hunan floods in southern **China** between June and July triggered the region's largest displacement,

more than 1,620,000 people. Further flooding displaced 547,000 in other southern provinces. Tropical storm Tembin, known locally as Vinta, displaced 865,000 people in **Viet Nam** and the **Philippines** in December, and tropical storm Kai-tak, known locally as Urduja, 765,000 in the Philippines and **Malaysia**, also in December. A number of smaller-scale storms, floods and volcanic eruptions also caused displacement in the region.

Beyond the nature and intensity of the hazards themselves, two factors lie behind the scale of displacement associated with disasters in East Asia and Pacific. The number of people and assets exposed to floods and cyclones is thought to have increased by around 70 per cent between 1980 and 2015, largely as a result of urban expansion driven by the region's booming economy.¹²¹ Today the region accounts for 30 per cent of the global population, most of whom live in urban areas exposed to a wide range of hazards including cyclones and storm surges, coastal and riverine floods, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis.¹²² Vulnerability is also important. As of 2014, 25 per cent of urban residents lived in slums and other settlements less able to withstand the impact of natural hazards.¹²³

Disasters have historically caused significant physical and economic losses, but the region has succeeded in

reducing mortality, the result of several countries introducing disaster risk reduction measures including early warning systems and pre-emptive evacuations.¹²⁴ The latter also constitute displacement, but of a different nature to that caused by the impacts of hazards themselves. If successfully implemented by more countries across the region, such measures would greatly reduce the scale of disaster mortality (see spotlight, p.30).

Pacific states in particular have established policies and guidelines to address human mobility associated with disasters, and these initiatives should be monitored closely for best practices and lessons learned for use in other countries and regions.¹²⁵ **Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu** have led the way in incorporating relocation, IDPs' human rights and cross-border movements into their governance arrangements, but clearer links between these national initiatives and the Nansen protection agenda and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are needed.¹²⁶

Though the vast majority of people displaced in East Asia and Pacific in 2017 fled disasters, the region was not immune from displacement associated with conflict. At least 655,500 Rohingya Muslims fled across the border into Bangladesh to escape **Myanmar's** military crackdown and inter-communal violence in Rakhine state, which also caused the internal displacement of about 26,700 non-Muslims. An unknown number of Rohingya may also have been internally displaced en route to Bangladesh. There were reports of thousands of people stuck at the border in northern Rakhine.

The refugee crisis in Bangladesh has been well-documented in the media, but access constraints in Rakhine mean little is known about the scale of internal displacement during the second half of the year, and figures cannot be verified.¹²⁷ Only a few international NGOs are able to operate in Rakhine, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNHCR. The scale of the refugee crisis, however, gives some indication of the protection concerns that any Rohingya still displaced in northern areas of the state, and more than 128,000 Rohingya and Kaman Muslims living in protracted displacement in central areas since 2012, are likely to face.

Nearly 22,000 new displacements were also recorded in Kachin, Shan and Chin states, areas where ethnic minorities have been in armed conflict with the **Myanmar** state for nearly seven decades. About 16,000 took place

in Kachin, where more than 89,000 people have been living in protracted displacement since 2011.

In the **Philippines**, the battle between the armed forces and ISIL affiliates for Marawi was the most significant outbreak of urban warfare in the country's recent history.¹²⁸ It began in May, lasted for five months and led to more than 350,000 new displacements before the government declared its military victory.

The Philippines adopted a national law in 2010 that recognises IDPs' rights in line with the Guiding Principles.¹²⁹ There are numerous examples of how it has helped people displaced by disasters, but it is unclear whether it has been put into action to protect and provide restitution for people fleeing conflict, including those in Marawi.¹³⁰

There are clearly disparate levels of governance capacity and responses to disaster and conflict induced displacement across East Asia and Pacific. Good practices such as some governments' recognition of the importance of protecting IDPs via laws, policies and strategies, and the implementation of measures to minimise or prevent displacement, such as pre-emptive evacuations, are encouraging. But better monitoring and disaggregation of displacement data will be required in order to assess gaps in responses, and allow countries with differing capacities to design and implement concrete measures to better support the region's IDPs.