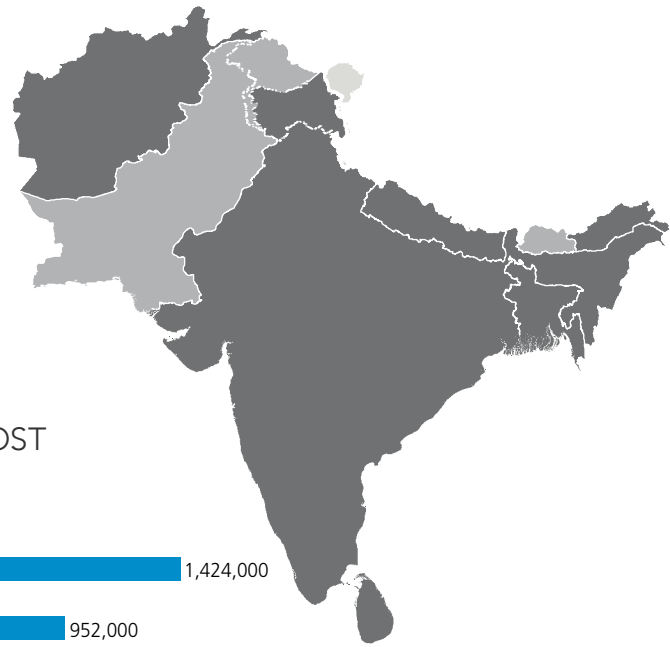
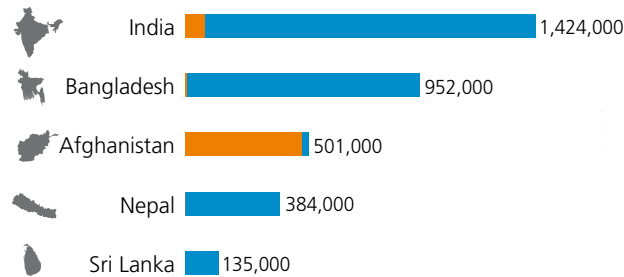


SOUTH ASIA



DISASTERS 15.1%
CONFLICT 5.4%
OF THE GLOBAL TOTAL

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict and disasters)



Disasters triggered most of the displacement in South Asia in 2017, with the exception of **Afghanistan** where conflict triggered 474,000 new displacements. Many of the 2.8 million new displacements associated with sudden-onset disasters took place in **Bangladesh, India, Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** during the monsoon season. Except for tropical cyclone Mora, which struck Bangladesh in May, most of the disasters were small-scale and attracted little, if any, international media coverage. Even intensive events such as Mora received relatively little coverage compared with the Atlantic hurricanes, despite displacing considerable numbers of people and creating greater needs in countries with lower income, resilience and capacity to respond.

Overall, the monsoon season was similar to those of previous years in terms of precipitation levels and the number of people displaced, but its impacts were still significant in a region of high exposure and vulnerability associated with poverty, inequality and unsustainable development. About 855,000 people were evacuated and hosted in camps in the **Indian** state of Bihar, where flooding also hit agricultural production. This harmed livelihoods and caused a sharp rise in unemployment, which in turn added to the number of people migrating from rural to urban areas in search of work.¹⁵¹

More than 436,000 people were displaced in **Bangladesh** by torrential rains that flooded up to a third of the country for several weeks. Poor communities in the

capital of Dhaka, which is home to more than 18 million people, were particularly hard hit.¹⁵² The city is one of the fastest growing in South Asia, and is expanding over marsh lands, leaving no space for water run-off.¹⁵³ Korail, its largest slum, is growing across a lake.

Recurrent flash floods and landslides destroyed nearly 89,000 homes and displaced 381,000 people across 35 districts of **Nepal**, including some, such as Biratnagar and Monrang, where flooding is relatively unusual. The Nepal Red Cross Society said the rains were the worst in 15 years.¹⁵⁴ In **Sri Lanka**, seven disaster events, mainly floods and landslides, triggered more than 135,000 new displacements. The country's Disaster Management Centre recorded widespread floods in May in the southern districts of Galle, Matara, Kalutara and Ratnapura, which forced 127,000 people to take refuge in official shelters.

The 2017 monsoon season highlighted again the negative consequences of poor planning and lack of preparedness. National and local authorities struggled to provide aid to millions of people in need.¹⁵⁵ The expansion of slums is an integral part of urbanisation in South Asia, which also heightens people's exposure, vulnerability and displacement risk. **Bangladesh, India** and **Nepal** have relatively low levels of urbanisation, at 35, 33 and 19 per cent respectively compared with the global average of 54 per cent.¹⁵⁶ This, however, is starting to change. India has 25 of the 100 fastest growing cities in the world, and Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata are among the ten fastest.¹⁵⁷

Our global model puts **Bangladesh, India** and **Pakistan** among the ten countries in the world with the highest disaster displacement risk, and the region as a whole has the highest number of people at risk of displacement by sudden-onset hazards relative to its population size. An average of 240 out of every 100,000 people might be expected to be displaced during any given year in the future, not including pre-emptive evacuations.¹⁵⁸

Some countries in the region have taken policy steps to address displacement associated with disasters. **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka** have begun to report against the Sendai framework by conducting data readiness reviews. Some also mention the need to assist and prioritise IDPs and other vulnerable groups in their DRR policies. Bangladesh has a specific policy on the management of displacement associated with disasters, and India has one that protects the rights of people displaced by development projects.¹⁵⁹

With 474,000 new displacements associated with conflict and violence, **Afghanistan** accounted for the majority of the conflict figures for the region (633,000). No major offensives took place during the year, but the security situation deteriorated to such an extent

that the country was reclassified from post-conflict to one in active conflict again.¹⁶⁰ The US and its allies also stepped up their bombing raids, including the US' use of the world's most powerful non-nuclear weapon to target groups affiliated to ISIL in the Achin district of Nangarhar province, close to the border with Pakistan.¹⁶¹

The number of displacements directly associated with the increased bombing is not clear, but the eastern and southern provinces most affected also had the largest number of displacements. The voluntary and involuntary return and deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, Iran and the EU added to the number of IDPs in the country and will continue to do so in 2018 (see spotlight, p.36).

Periodic violations of the ceasefire between **India** and **Pakistan** in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir led to at least 70,000 new displacements in Indian-controlled areas and at least 53,000 in Pakistani-controlled areas.



A woman affected by the floods wades through the waist-deep water in search of clean water. Photo: BDRCSI/ Aminul Shawon, August 2017