

- 396 natural disasters
- 11 755 fatalities
- Over 95 million affected
- Cost 130 billion US\$

In 2019, at least 396 natural disasters were reported in EM-DAT killing 11,755 people, affecting 95 million others and costing nearly 130 billion US\$. The number of events this year is slightly over the average of the last 10 years (343 disaster events recorded in EM-DAT). At a regional level, Asia was the most vulnerable continent with 40% of all disaster events, accounting for 45% of the total deaths and 74% of the people affected by disasters globally.

Human impact

The deadliest event in 2019 were the summer heat waves that affected Europe, more specifically France, Belgium and the Netherlands with over 2500 deaths **. The second one was the flood in India which lasted from July to October, due to the high monsoon rains, affecting 13 states mainly in the North and leaving nearly 2000 dead.

Two storms were the next deadliest: cyclone Idai affecting Mozambique and Zimbabwe (March) with nearly 1000 deaths; and storm Dorian affecting the United States and the Bahamas in September with at least 358 deaths/missing. We recorded more than twice as many floods (194) as storms (91) this year, both types affecting nearly 64 million people worldwide.

Wildfires

The year was particularly characterized by large wildfires, which caused human losses which also had a dramatic impact on the environment. The economic damage caused by wildfires has sharply increased since 2014 (279 million US\$) and already reached 30 billion US\$ in 2019 (25 billion US\$ for USA only). The Australian wildfires caught the public's attention. The economic impact of these fires is estimated at approximately 5 billion US\$. This estimate is likely to change in the future once there is more precise insight on the exact impact.

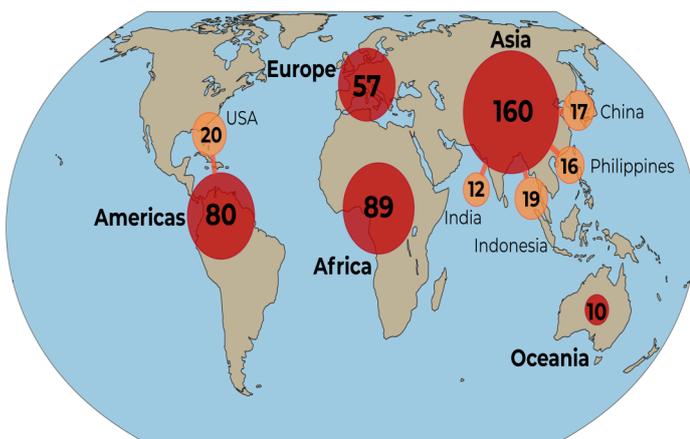
At least 14 wildfires started in 2019, of which the most important once were:

- California/USA (Kincade, Saddleridge and Sandalwood fires, October) with low human impact but costing at least 25 billion US\$

- Multi country event in South America/Amazonia: it is quite difficult to have realistic figures on the human impact and the causal factors (human and natural). In general, wildfires are often due to a human factor, then increase by natural conditions such as lack of rains, drought, wind, high temperatures, and this mechanism was likely the same in this event.

Australia (September 2019 to February 2020): It has so far led to 32 people killed, over 6 million hectares of forest and bush burned, almost 500 million animals killed, thousands of homes destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people evacuated

On the other side, two wildfire incidents occurred in South Sudan (May) and China (April), with respectively 50 and 30 dead, but with no media impact nor statements from national authorities.



Equal Earth Projection

Data: EM-DAT 2020

Fig.1: Number of disaster events by continent

* Biological disasters not included

** Excess mortality

Fig. 2: Annual evolution of economic damage and number of people affected by wildfires (2009-2019)

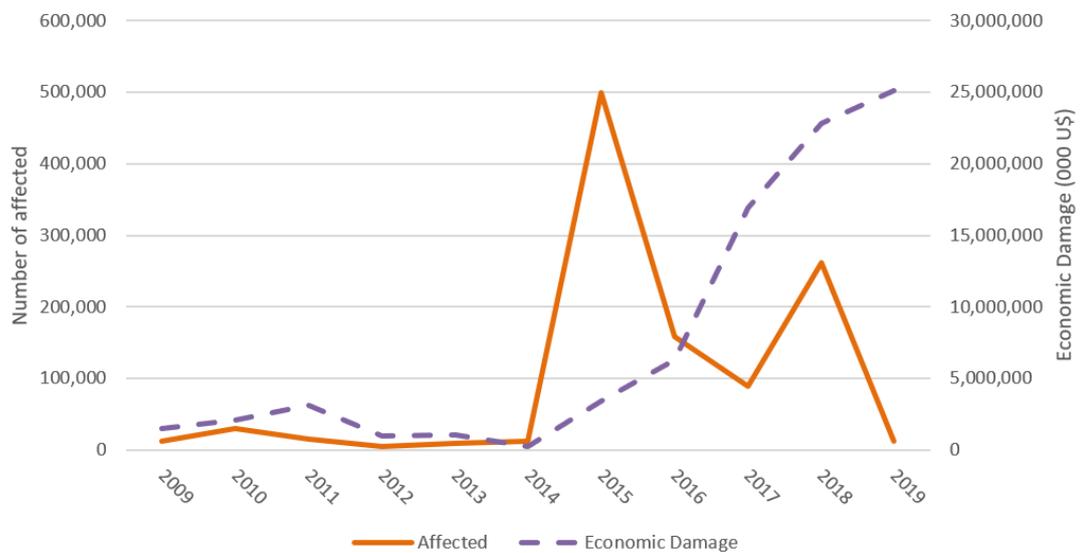
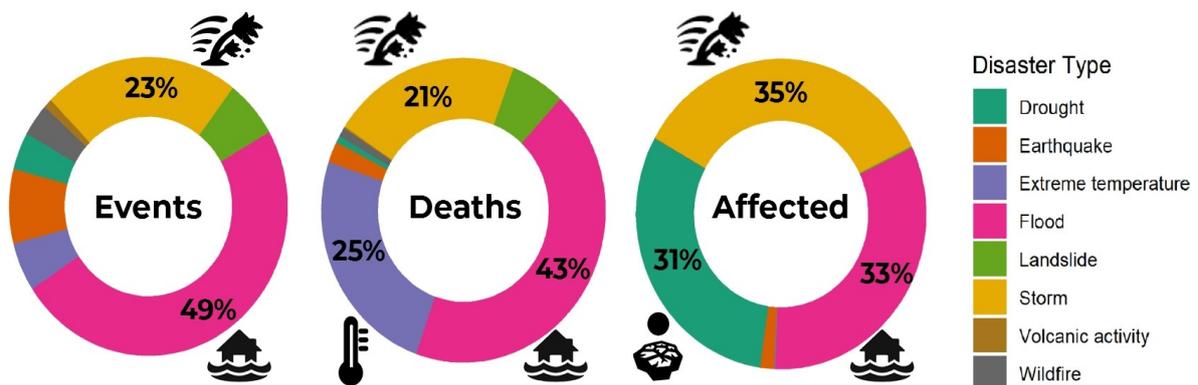


Fig.3: Share by disaster type 2019



Conclusions :

- Floods and storms accounted for 68% of the total number of affected people
- Wildfires have captured international attention and rightly so
- Extreme temperatures, especially heat waves, are underreported and current figures do not give the ‘complete’ picture of their massive human impact, neither in Europe or in the poorest countries
- Nearly half the total number of affected people were located in just 4 developing countries: India, Iran , Philippines and Zimbabwe
- While economic costs are increasingly better reported, especially in developed countries, human impacts, including deaths, remain significantly underestimated

- New platform developed to get access to the EM-DAT database : www.emdat.be
- Recent Publications:: (1) Moitinho de Almeida, Maria ; Schlüter, Benjamin-Samuel ; van Loenhout, Joris Adriaan Frank ; Thapa, Sunil Singh ; Kumar, K. C. ; Singh, Ravikant ; Guha-Sapir, Debarati ; Mahara, Deepak Prakash. *Changes in patient admissions after the 2015 Earthquake: a tertiary hospital-based study in Kathmandu, Nepal.* In: *Scientific Reports*, Vol. 10, no.1, p. 9p. and (2) Baten, Abdul ; Wallemacq, Pascaline ; van Loenhout, Joris ; Guha-Sapir, Debarati. *Impact of Recurrent Floods on the Utilization of Maternal and Newborn Healthcare in Bangladesh.* In: *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 13p.
- Data are subject to change, for enquires: contact@emdat.be