

Discussion of Trends in Disasters and Disaster Fatalities

According to the WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate, and Water Extremes (1970-2019), there were over 11,000 reported disasters attributed to these hazards worldwide, with just over 2 million deaths and US\$ 3.64 trillion in losses.¹ Over the past 50 years, there have been five times as many disasters. There are multiple interconnected factors that have contributed to the rise in natural disasters in recent years. First, climate change has led to more frequent and severe extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods, and droughts. These phenomena are exacerbated by rising global temperatures, thus having a larger effect on both individuals and the built environment. Secondly, because of the spread of human settlements into susceptible places like floodplains and coastal regions, inhabitants and infrastructure are more frequently exposed to natural catastrophes. The apparent rise in their occurrence may be due to improved reporting and monitoring systems, which have made it easier to identify and document natural disasters.

The average worldwide fatality rate and the rate of economic loss have dropped by 6.5 and approximately 5 times, respectively, from 1980-1989 to 2007-2016, despite an increase in the frequency of natural disasters.² Our capacity to mitigate the effects of disasters and evacuate vulnerable populations has grown because to improvements in disaster planning, early warning systems, and emergency response processes. Additionally, improved understanding and awareness regarding disaster risk reduction have helped people and governments make better, informed decisions. However, it's crucial to remember that while the average number of deaths is declining, the financial losses brought on by natural disasters continue to rise, emphasizing the necessity for ongoing efforts in disaster risk reduction and adaptation methods.

Regarding the decline in terrorist events in some parts of the world, several factors may be contributing to this trend. Terrorist groups now find it increasingly challenging to run their operations and carry out attacks because of improved counterterrorism measures, intelligence sharing, and international collaboration. A decrease in extremist ideology and the recruiting of terrorists may also have occurred in some locations because of changes in political dynamics or changes in leadership. The attractiveness of extremist beliefs can be diminished in some regions via social and economic growth as well as initiatives to address the roots of terrorism. However, given that the threat environment may change quickly, it is imperative to maintain vigilance and continue efforts in preventing terrorism internationally.

References:

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