

G 01: TRACK INFORMATION ON CONFLICTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS, AND POTENTIAL IMPACT ON MIGRANTS



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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Tracking the risks and exposure to conflicts and natural disasters in regions, countries and localities, and assessing how such crises can affect migrants and their assets, is a vital step towards protecting migrants. Understanding regional, national and local risks, and overlaying this information with data on the location and characteristics of migrants can inform targeted preparation and response efforts.

All conflicts and natural disasters are not entirely unpredictable. Conflicts may be preceded by various signs, including protests, xenophobic violence and civil unrest. While many natural disasters occur with great immediacy, different countries and regions are more prone to specific types of hazards than others; those related to weather events for example, often occur with some forewarning, and some are cyclical and recurrent. A number of early warning systems exist to monitor hazards and alert communities. Often, local actors may possess the most timely and accurate information on impending crises and are valuable sources of knowledge.

Lessons from the Tohoku Disaster in Japan (2011)

During the 2011 Tohoku triple disaster in Japan, the short-term, automatically issued earthquake warnings were not adequately translated into languages that migrants could understand. Follow-up information, particularly on the levels of contamination resulted from the Fukushima nuclear accident, was neither as good nor as comprehensive as the information provided to the Japanese public. As a consequence, many migrants turned to their own consular corps and television stations for news and guidance. These sources, however, did not always have the most up-to-date information and often pushed overly prudent solutions. This included suggesting the evacuation of migrants from areas not affected by the contamination. Contradictions between this messaging and the official Japanese communications also reduced overall trust, and particularly that of non-nationals, in Japanese authorities.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON NATURAL DISASTERS AND CONFLICTS

STATES

States collect, analyze, and disseminate knowledge on natural disasters and conflicts and on risks faced by communities. They can use such data to develop and send warnings to citizens and migrants to prepare them in the event of a crisis. States could obtain information from other States and develop common understandings of risks by establishing arrangements for bilateral, regional, and international cooperation, access, and use of data and information.

[Crisis Alert System, Philippines](#)

The Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippine Government jointly adopted a Crisis Alert System which serves as the basis for emergency repatriation and deployment restrictions of Overseas Filipino Workers. Based on the crisis alert levels, the Department of Foreign Affairs can issue travel advisories, and establish or lift travel bans. The crisis alert levels are four: alert level 1 (precautionary phase), alert level 2 (restriction phase), alert level 3 (voluntary repatriation) and alert level 4 (mandatory repatriation).

[Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism \(CEWARN\), IGAD Region](#)

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) was established in 2002 as a cooperative initiative of the seven member countries to prevent violent conflicts. CEWARN's mandate is to receive and share information concerning potentially violent conflicts, as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD region, undertake and share analysis of that information, develop case scenarios and formulate options for response, share and communicate information on response options; and carry out studies on specific types and areas of conflict in the IGAD region.

EARLY WARNING AND ALERT SYSTEMS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS ADAPTED AND TESTED TO REACH MIGRANTS

MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

To ensure migrants are able to access useful and reliable warning information in a timely manner, early warning and crisis alert systems should be developed or adapted to take into account the characteristics of migrants and their vulnerabilities. Limited language skills, different levels of awareness and perceptions of risks, lack of trust in authorities, and limited access to communication channels can inhibit migrants' access to alerts and warnings. For these very reasons, warnings should be translated into languages spoken by migrants, using clear and simple wording. Messages may need to be targeted specifically to migrants to take account of their perceptions and inhibitions. It may be particularly useful to broadcast alerts and warning through communication channels used by migrants and to disseminate information personally (for example through door-to-door visits).

[Disaster prevention website of the Mie prefecture, Japan](#)

The website provides up-to-date warnings and emergency information in Chinese, Korean, English, Portuguese and Spanish. It also includes information on available services, projected paths of storms, and evacuation orders and instructions.

[World Disaster Alerts App, Pacific Disaster Centre](#)

This free mobile application provides mobile access to multi-hazard monitoring of and early warning for natural disasters around the globe. The DisasterAWARE platform provides users with near real-time access to data on active hazards globally — highlighting events that are designated potentially hazardous to people, property or assets. The app has currently almost 1.6 million users worldwide.

[Hyogo E-Net, Japan](#)

The Hyogo E-Net is a system designed to utilize current trends in mobile and wireless information technology in order to supplement conventional systems for disaster management, such as radio and loudspeaker vans, which directly supplies local citizens with emergency information (on earthquakes, tsunamis, weather warnings), evacuation information and other vital information via e-mail on mobile phones and websites. In the event of disasters, this system will expedite the transmission of vital information in the most immediate manner possible. By registering at the website of their municipality, people will receive messages containing information regarding emergencies, earthquakes, tsunamis, and weather warnings from Hyogo Prefecture and their municipality. The Hyogo E-Net was designed based on the lessons learned through the experiences of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Information on the website is provided in 5 different languages.

INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS CHARACTERISTICS IN DISASTER VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENTS

STATES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Risk assessments that capture characteristics of migrant populations can provide information on the ways in which crises can impact migrants. Such information can often be crucial in identifying obstacles that may inhibit migrants from accessing alerts and life-saving crisis-related messages. Risk assessments can also include collecting and analyzing data on losses derived from past crises. Such assessments can provide information on patterns of vulnerability, language proficiency, immigration status, communication channels and local networks, and help determine how these factors restrict or enhance protection during crises.

[Emergency Preparedness: Knowledge and Perceptions of Latin American Immigrants, USA](#)

Published by the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved (18, 2007, 465–481), this study looks at the level of public emergency knowledge and perceptions of risks among Latin American immigrants in the USA, and their preferred and actual sources of emergency preparedness information, including warning signals. The study is based on the results of five Latino community member focus groups, and one focus group of community health workers in a suburban county of Washington D.C. It highlights that language barriers are an important contributor to the ineffectiveness of disaster information dissemination and related problems, particularly in multicultural communities. Disaster and hazard warnings in the US are often broadcast only in English, leaving many ethnic minorities relatively susceptible to danger.

[Hazard exposure and vulnerability of migrants, Thailand](#)

This report (IOM, 2016) explores what implications migrants' presence holds for emergencies, especially those arising from natural hazards. Thailand is a country that experienced a significant influx of migrants over the last decades and that is prone to a variety of hazards, particularly recurrent floods and storms, and widespread droughts. The report is based on existing data on immigration in Thailand, relevant migration trends and stocks, possible risks that may affect migrants in the country, and the specific conditions of vulnerability migrants face. It is also based on data regarding environmental issues in Thailand, particularly main natural hazards and the types of disasters that have affected the country in the past. The comparative analysis of these two sets of data leads to the identification of the main high-risk, high-immigration locations. Finally, the report examines the institutional structures and the policies related to disaster risk management.

MECHANISMS TO SHARE CONFLICT OR NATURAL DISASTER ANALYSIS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

States of Origin can actively monitor and assess potential risks for their citizens abroad, with a particular focus on major countries of destination. Establishing mechanisms which allow stakeholders to regularly share information and analysis on conflict or natural disaster risks with each other, promotes consistent messaging and can facilitate informed decision-making and joint approaches. Such mechanisms can include networks that enable State, private and civil society actors to monitor and exchange risk-related information; information sharing forums for consular personnel and relevant Host State actors (such as emergency prevention and response focal points); and websites that provide information on conflicts and natural disasters with link to other relevant resources.

[Overseas Security Advisory Council, USA](#)

The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) was created in 1985 under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to promote security cooperation between US private sector interests worldwide and the US Department of State. The OSAC Council is comprised of 34 private and public sector member organizations that represent specific industries or agencies operating abroad. OSAC's mission is to establish continuing liaison and to provide for operational security cooperation between the US State Department security functions and the private sector, to provide for regular and timely interchange of information between the private sector and the State Department concerning developments in the overseas security environment, and to recommend methods for coordinating security planning and implementation of security programmes.

[Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness Inter-Agency Standing Committee](#)

The Reference Group was set up by the IASC, the primary humanitarian coordination mechanism to strengthen the humanitarian response. The Reference Group seeks to enhance preparedness of the IASC system as well as to build on national and local actors preparedness capacities. The overarching result sought by the Group is that the IASC system, as part of wider efforts, is effectively and efficiently prepared to respond to emergencies and protracted crises. The Group produces Early Warning-Early Action Reports that are consistent with humanitarian principles, so that the IASC emergency capacity can systematically respond as required.

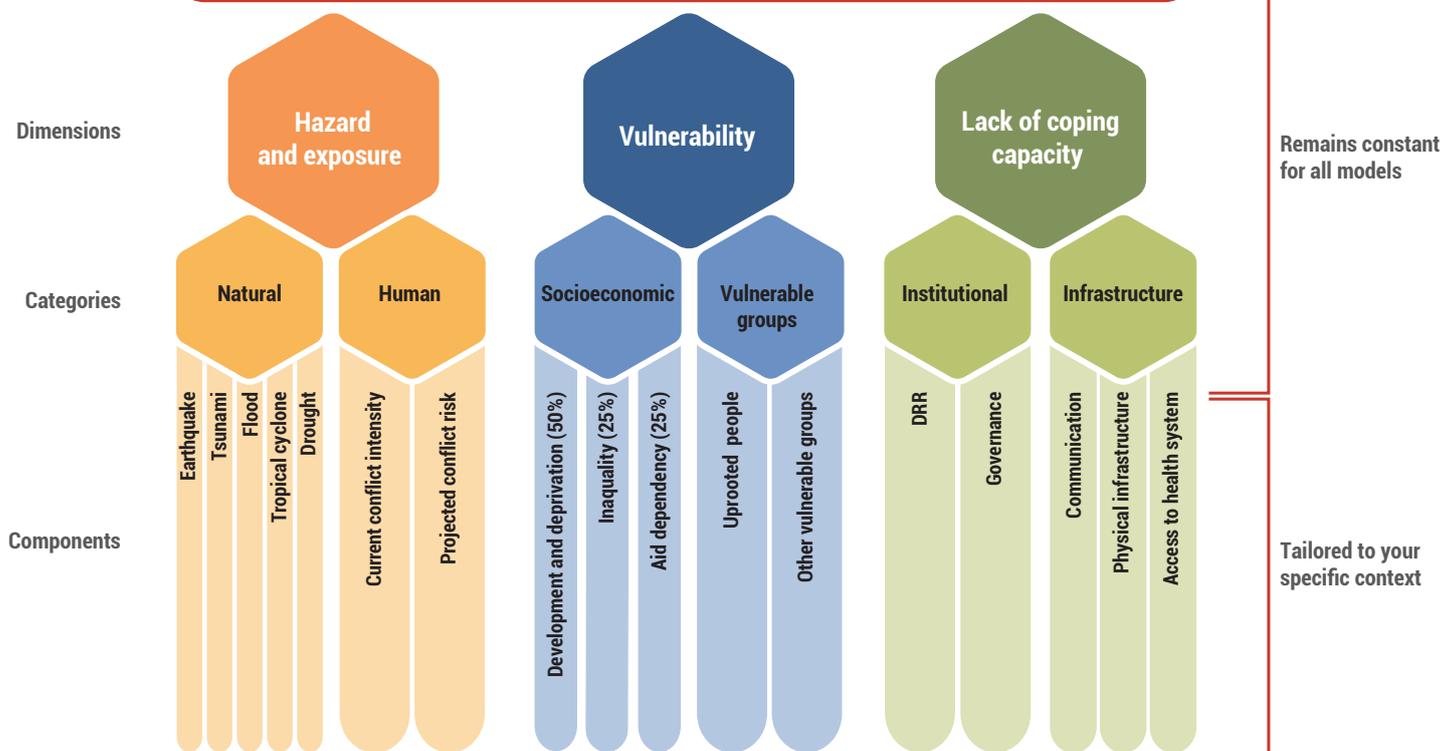
INFORM – INDEX FOR RISK MANAGEMENT

INFORM is a global, open-source methodology for assessing the risk of humanitarian crisis and disasters. INFORM can help identify where and why crises and disasters are likely to occur to help reduce the risks, build people's resilience and prepare and respond better. For example, INFORM can be used to help develop priorities for risk management, preparedness and building resilience; support decisions about resource allocation; and to monitor risk trends over time. INFORM is a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience and the European Commission.

The overall INFORM risk index identifies countries at risk from humanitarian crises and disasters that could overwhelm national response capacity. It is made up of three dimensions – hazards and exposure, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity. INFORM also provides country profiles with in-depth information on each country, such as trends, comparisons with countries with similar risk, regional and income-group averages and more information at the indicator level. Country profiles can be used to provide more in-depth information on risk in a particular country. For more information about INFORM please visit: www.inform-index.org.



INFORM



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The Guidelines in Action present implementation examples and tools to support the operationalization of the MICIC Initiative Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster. Practices and tools may be relevant for one or more stakeholders. Find more examples of practices in the MICIC Guidelines and in the online Repository of Practices on our website. Contact: micicsecretariat@iom.int micicinitiative.iom.int
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