

January 2014 Global Catastrophe Recap





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Executive Summary

- Series of powerful winter storms bring excessive snow and bitter cold to the United States
- Torrential rains cause widespread flood damage and dozens of fatalities in parts of Asia and South America
- Windstorms Anne and Christina continue active winter storm season for western and northern Europe

No fewer than four separate stretches of winter weather affected United States in January, bringing heavy accumulating snowfall, sleet, freezing rain, ice, gusty winds, and bitterly cold Arctic air to much of the country. The most significant – and costliest – period occurred during the second week of the month, where at least 21 people were killed. More than 20 inches (51 centimeters) of snow fell in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley, while freezing rain coated the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. The coldest temperatures in two decades then descended into the central and eastern U.S., with at least 20 states recording wind chill values minimally at -30°F (-34°C). Widespread property damage and severe travel delays occurred as a result of the cold and snow. Total direct economic losses were estimated at USD3.0 billion, while insured losses were listed in excess of USD1.6 billion.

The three other stretches combined to kill at least 33 people and caused more than USD500 million in economic damages. Business interruption losses were elevated due to severely delayed transport and/or closed commerce.

Winter conditions were also prevalent in Asia. China's Ministry of Civil Affairs reported that nearly USD170 million in economic damages had occurred to agricultural land and crops due to snow and freezing temperatures. In Thailand, at least 63 people died after the coldest air in 30 years arrived descended into the country. An additional 25 cold-related fatalities occurred in India.

Torrential rainfall enhanced by the nearby passage of Tropical Storm Lingling spawned widespread flooding and landslides across the southern Philippines. At least 79 people were left dead or missing. In Indonesia, seasonal rains caused severe flooding and landslides throughout the archipelago, which killed a combined 71 people.

Additional flooding left dozens of people dead across parts of Bolivia, Brazil and Tanzania.

An active windstorm season continued in Europe during January, with windstorms Anne and Christina each affecting western and northern sections of the continent. Windstorm Christina was the most significant as it brought heavy rains, gusty winds and an elevated tide to the United Kingdom, France and Scandinavia. Economic damages in Ireland alone were estimated at roughly USD405 million.

A magnitude-6.2 struck New Zealand's lower North Island with an epicenter 34 kilometers (21 miles) south-southeast of Palmerston North. Most damage was due to broken windows, cracked walls, fallen chimneys, and fallen indoor contents. The New Zealand Earthquake Commission received at least 4,004 claims with payouts expected to reach the millions of dollars (NZD).

Other earthquakes occurred in Greece, Puerto Rico, and Iran.

Mount Sinabung continued to erupt throughout January into early February after first beginning in September 2013. The eruptions led to the deaths of 32 people in Indonesia's North Sumatra, where 32,000 residents were forced to evacuate their homes. Total economic losses were listed minimally at IDR1.0 trillion (USD83 million).

The combination of extreme heat, dry conditions and gusty winds led to hundreds of bushfires to burn in multiple Australian states. At least two people were killed. The most significant bushfire was registered in Western Australia's Perth Hills region, where at least 56 homes were destroyed. The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) declared the event a catastrophe and expected payouts to top USD13 million.

Tropical Cyclone Ian tracked through Tonga as a Category 4 storm, killing at least one person. The storm left severe damage to the island chain of Ha'apai, where 75% of all homes (1,130) were impacted.



United States

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-1/5	Winter Weather	Midwest, Ohio Valley, Northeast	16	10,000+	200+ million
1/5-1/8	Winter Weather	Midwest, Northeast, Southeast	21	150,000+	3.0+ billion
1/11	Severe Weather	Southeast	2	5,000+	50+ million
1/20-1/22	Winter Weather	Central and Eastern U.S.	4	Thousands+	100+ million
1/26-1/29	Winter Weather	Southeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic	13	Thousands+	250+ million

A strong winter storm brought heavy snowfall, accumulating ice and gusty winds across the Eastern U.S. between the 1st and 5th, killing at least 16 people. The storm originally tracked through the Midwest and Ohio Valley before moving offshore and deepening into a powerful Nor'easter. The system brought nearly two feet (61 centimeters) of snow to portions of coastal New England while causing extensive travel delays. Total economic losses were estimated at USD200 million, while insured losses were listed in excess of USD125 million.

Heavy snowfall and extreme cold gripped much of the Central and Eastern U.S. between the 5th and 8th, leading to the deaths of at least 21 people. Initially, heavy snowfall occurred throughout the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley, with snow totals topping 20 inches (51 centimeters). Freezing rain was also recorded in parts of the Mid-Atlantic and the Northeast. As the main front passed, bitter cold and very gusty winds sent temperatures well below zero. At least 20 states recorded wind chill values minimally at -30°F (-34°C). Widespread property damage and severe travel delays occurred as a result of the cold and snow. Total direct economic losses were estimated at USD3.0 billion, while insured losses were listed in excess of USD1.6 billion.

Severe thunderstorms left widespread damage across the Southeast on the 11th, killing at least two people. The inclement weather spawned damaging straight-line winds and at least four EF-0 tornado touchdowns, with the most notable damage in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Most of the damage occurred due to downed trees and power lines. Total economic losses were estimated at USD50 million.

A winter storm brought heavy snow and gusty winds to much of the central and eastern United States between the 20th and 22nd, killing four people. Bitterly cold air also accompanied the system in the Midwest, Ohio Valley and Northeast; with temperatures also well below normal in the Southeast. Most damage reports were due to frozen pipes bursting, downed tree limbs, and hundreds of traffic accidents. The inclement weather led to severe travel delays. Total economic losses were listed in excess of USD100 million.

A winter storm prompted accumulating snowfall, freezing rain, ice, sleet, and well-below normal temperatures across the central and eastern U.S. between the 26th and 29th, leading to the deaths of at least 13 people. The wintry conditions paralyzed travel in several Southeastern states, with the city of Atlanta, Georgia particularly affected. States of emergency were declared in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina due to the wintry weather. Total economic damages were roughly USD250 million.

Remainder of North America (Canada, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean Islands, Bermuda)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/13	Earthquake	Puerto Rico	0	Hundreds+	Unknown

A strong offshore earthquake rattled Puerto Rico early on the 13th, though only minor damage was reported. The magnitude-6.4 tremor struck at 12:01 AM local time (4:01 UTC) with an epicenter located 98 kilometers (61 miles) northwest of San Juan. Reports from residents indicated that the most severe damage included cracked floors and walls, broken windows, and burst water pipes. No major structural damage was noted.



South America

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-2/28	Flooding	Bolivia	64	25,000+	100+ million
1/12	Flooding	Brazil	24	500+	Unknown

Heavy seasonal rains inundated much of Bolivia during January and February, killing at least 64 people. Government officials declared a national state of emergency in the hardest-hit flood areas in the departments of Beni, La Paz, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Oruro, Pando, Tarija, and Santa Cruz. In total, at least 83 municipalities sustained varying levels of flood inundation and landslides. More than 150,000 people were left homeless or displaced and agricultural lands were destroyed. Total economic damages were listed in excess of BOB690 million (USD100 million).

A severe thunderstorm brought excessive rainfall to the town of Itaoca, Brazil on the 12th, leading to the Palmital River overflowing its banks and leading to 24 people being declared dead or missing. The water submerged at least 10% of the town, which is located in Sao Paulo state. A disaster was declared, as hundreds of homes and structures were damaged or destroyed. Another 50 homes were also affected in the nearby town of Apiai.

Europe

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
12/23-3/1	Flooding	United Kingdom	0	420,000+	1.5+ billion
1/2-1/3	WS Anne	United Kingdom, France	0	Thousands+	100+ million
1/5-1/7	WS Christina	UK, France, Scandinavia	3	Thousands+	500+ million
1/26-1/30	Winter Weather	Central/Western Europe	4	5,000+	Millions+
1/26-2/3	Earthquakes	Greece	0	1,000+	Millions+

Persistent heavy rains associated with a series of windstorms and other synoptic events led to severe flooding across the United Kingdom between the end of December 2013 and early 2014. Some parts of England recorded their heaviest rain totals since 1766 as major floods occurred in the Thames River Valley. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) reported that at least 420,000 flood claims had been filed, with insurers estimating payouts approaching GBP585 million (USD1.0 billion). Total economic losses were expected to top GBP900 million (USD1.5 billion).

Windstorm Anne affected parts of the United Kingdom and France on the 2nd and 3rd, prompting river and coastal flooding and winds gusting up to 150 kph (90 mph). River flooding was most prevalent in multiple western British towns and northwestern France. Waves up to 9.0 meters (30 feet) in height combined with the gusty winds and an unusually high tide to also bring water inundation to several coastal locales in Wales, southwest England and Northern Ireland. Total economic losses were estimated in excess of EUR75 million (USD100 million).

Windstorm Christina brought flooding rains and gusty winds to portions of the United Kingdom, France and Scandinavia between the 5th and 7th, killing at least three people. Ireland sustained the worst damage, where extensive impacts were registered to infrastructure and coastal homes and other buildings. Economic damages in Ireland alone were listed at nearly EUR300 million (USD405 million).

A series of winter storms swept across central and eastern Europe between the 26th and 30th, bringing heavy snow and very cold temperatures to several countries. At least four fatalities were reported. The hardest-hit areas included Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Norway, Russia, and Croatia. All four of the initial fatalities were recorded in Bulgaria, where at least 46 villages in northeastern provinces were left without electricity. The Norwegian insurance industry expected auto claims to top NOK30 million (USD5.0 million).



Two strong earthquakes struck western Greece's island of Cephalonia on January 26 and February 3, causing widespread damage in multiple towns and villages. No fatalities occurred, though at least 23 people were injured. The initial magnitude-6.2 tremor was registered at 3:55 PM local time (13:55 UTC) with an epicenter 3.0 kilometers (2.0 miles) south of Lixouri, Greece. A magnitude-6.1 aftershock occurred at 5:08 AM local time (3:08 UTC) with an epicenter 12 kilometers (7.0 miles) northwest of Lixouri, Greece. Most of the damage in the hardest-hit towns (including Lixouri, Kounopetra, and Fiskardo) was due to cracking, partially fallen facades, and broken windows.

Africa

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/21	Flooding	Tanzania	1	4,086+	Millions+

Torrential rains prompted flash flooding in Tanzania's Morogoro region on the 21st, killing at least one person and causing widespread property damage. Officials cited the most severe impacts in the districts of Kilosa, Mvomero, and Gairo, where a combined 4,086 homes, schools, businesses and other structures were inundated by floodwaters.

Asia

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/1-2/1	Volcano	Indonesia	32	Unknown	83+ million
1/2	Earthquake	Iran	1	Thousands+	Millions+
1/11-1/20	Flooding	Philippines	79	3,500+	13+ million
1/12-1/15	Winter Weather	China	0	Unknown	89+ million
1/14-1/17	Flooding	Indonesia	20	10,844+	153+ million
1/14-1/21	Flooding	Indonesia	12	38,762+	430+ million
1/15-1/31	Winter Weather	Thailand	63	Unknown	Unknown
1/17-1/20	Winter Weather	India	25	Unknown	Unknown
1/17-1/22	Winter Weather	China	0	Unknown	79+ million
1/19-1/22	Flooding	Indonesia	13	4,000+	515+ million
1/24-1/28	Flooding	Indonesia	26	100+	173+ million

Mount Sinabung continued to erupt throughout January into early February after first beginning in September 2013. The eruptions led to the deaths of 32 people in Indonesia's North Sumatra, where 32,000 residents were forced to evacuate their homes. The National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB) reported that total economic losses were at least IDR1.0 trillion (USD83 million).

A moderate magnitude-5.5 earthquake struck southern Iran on the 2nd, killing at least one person and injuring 30 others. The tremor occurred at 6:43 AM local time (3:13 UTC) with an epicenter located 47 kilometers (29 miles) south of Lar, Iran. The most significant damage was registered in Hormuzgan Province, where as many as 60% of homes had been damaged or destroyed. The town of Bastak and surrounding villages were the hardest-hit.

Torrential rainfall enhanced by the nearby passage of Tropical Storm Lingling spawned widespread flooding and landslides across the southern Philippines between the 11th and 17th, leaving at least 79 people dead or missing and 85 others injured. Roughly 1.2 million residents were affected after dozens of rivers overflowed their banks. More than 3,500 homes and more than 110 roads and bridges were damaged or destroyed. Agricultural lands were impacted as well. Economic losses were listed at PHP567 million (USD13 million).



Heavy snow and sub-freezing temperatures affected China's Sichuan and Yunnan provinces between the 12th and 15th, causing widespread agricultural damage. No fatalities or serious injuries were reported. The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) reported heavy damage to crops, with economic losses estimated at CNY536 million (USD89 million).

Heavy rains fell across Indonesia's North Sulawesi province between the 14th and 17th, leading to widespread flash flooding and landslides that left at least 20 people dead. Officials reported that multiple rivers burst their banks and sent torrents of water through the city of Manado and the regions of North Minahasa, Tomohon, Minahasa, South Minahasa, and Sangihe. At least 10,844 homes and other structures were damaged. Total economic losses were listed at IDR1.87 trillion (USD153 million).

Multiple days of heavy rains prompted widespread flooding across Indonesia's capital of Jakarta between the 14th and 21st, killing at least 12 people. The floods affected 34 districts in the metropolitan region, with 38,762 homes affected after swollen rivers burst their banks and led to 2.0 meters (7.0 feet) of floodwaters in residential and commercial areas. Combined damages to personal and commercial properties were estimated at more than IDR5.0 trillion (USD430 million) in damages.

Some of the coldest air in decades affected much of Thailand during the second half of January, with the death toll from the winter season listed at 63. The Thai Meteorological Department reported that Bangkok had its coldest morning low in 30 years, while other areas in the northern part of the country registered morning lows down to 2°C (35°F). At least 45 provinces declared disaster zones due to the cold temperatures.

Periods of cold weather and accumulating snowfall fell across portions of northern India between the 17th and 20th, leading to the deaths of at least 25 people. The majority of the fatalities were recorded in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where temperatures dropped to as low as -9°C (16°F) in valley locations. Other winter weather-related casualties occurred in Kashmir, Uttarakhand and the capital city of Delhi.

Heavy snow and sub-freezing temperatures affected China's Sichuan and Guangxi provinces between the 17th and 22nd, causing widespread agricultural damage. No fatalities or serious injuries were reported. The Ministry of Civil Affairs reported that total agricultural losses were estimated at CNY475 million (USD79 million).

Flooding and landslides also were registered in Central Java between the 19th and 22nd, following days of heavy rains. At least 13 people were killed and more than 4,000 were left homeless following five rivers bursting their banks. Water levels were as high as 1.5 meters (4.9 feet). Total economic losses were listed at IDR6.0 trillion (USD515 million).

Torrential rains affected Indonesia between the 24th and 28th, multiple landslides on the main island of Java left at least 26 people dead. The first landslide occurred in Central Java's Kudos district, as rocks and debris collapsed onto homes and left 12 people dead. Another large landslide occurred in Mekarasri village in East Java's Jombang district that buried five homes and killed 14 people. Total economic losses were listed at IDR2.0 trillion (USD173 million).

Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific Islands)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
1/10-1/12	CY lan	Tonga	1	1,130+	48+ million
1/12-1/19	Wildfires	Australia (WA, VIC, SA)	2	350+	25+ million
1/20	Earthquake	New Zealand	0	4,004+	Millions+
1/30-1/31	CY Dylan	Australia (QLD)	0	Unknown	Unknown



Tropical Cyclone lan tracked through Tonga at Category 4 intensity on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, killing at least one person and injuring dozens of others. The storm left severe damage to the northeast island chain of Ha'apai, where up to 75% of all homes were impacted. In total, at least 1,130 homes and other structures damaged or destroyed due to powerful winds, storm surge and torrential rains. Total economic losses from lan were estimated at TOP90.2 million (USD48 million).

The combination of extreme heat, dry conditions and gusty winds led to hundreds of bushfires to burn in multiple Australian states between the 12th and 19th. At least two people were killed. The most significant bushfire was registered in Western Australia's Perth Hills region, where at least 56 homes were destroyed. The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) declared the event a catastrophe and noted that it had received more than 350 claims with payouts expected to be at least AUD15 million (USD13 million). Additional fires caused damage in the states of Victoria and South Australia.

A magnitude-6.2 earthquake struck New Zealand's lower North Island on the 20th, with minor damage reported in several districts. The tremor was registered at 3:52 PM local time (2:52 UTC) with an epicenter 34 kilometers (21 miles) south-southeast of Palmerston North, New Zealand. According to local officials, the majority of the reported damage occurred in the Wairarapa and Palmerston North areas. Most impacts were associated with broken windows, cracked walls, fallen chimneys, and fallen indoor contents. The New Zealand Earthquake Commission received at least 4,004 claims with payouts expected to reach the millions of dollars (NZD).

Tropical Cyclone Dylan developed near Australia's North Queensland and came ashore on the 31st with tropical storm-force winds. No serious damage or human casualties were reported. The Bureau of Meteorology reported that Dylan officially came ashore at 3:30 AM local time (17:30 UTC January 30) near the coastal town of Bowen with 100 kph (65 mph) sustained winds. Prior to Dylan's arrival, about 2,600 properties were evacuated from their homes in low-lying areas in Bowen and Airlie Beach.

Additional Report Details

TD = Tropical Depression, TS = Tropical Storm, HU = Hurricane, TY = Typhoon, STY = Super Typhoon, CY = Cyclone

Fatality estimates as reported by public news media sources and official government agencies.

Structures defined as any building – including barns, outbuildings, mobile homes, single or multiple family dwellings, and commercial facilities – that is damaged or destroyed by winds, earthquakes, hail, flood, tornadoes, hurricanes or any other natural-occurring phenomenon. Claims defined as the number of claims (which could be a combination of homeowners, commercial, auto and others) reported by various insurance companies through press releases or various public media outlets.

Damage estimates are obtained from various public media sources, including news websites, publications from insurance companies, financial institution press releases and official government agencies. Damage estimates are obtained from various public media sources, including news websites, publications from insurance companies, financial institution press releases and official government agencies. Economic loss totals include any available insured loss estimates, which can be found in the corresponding event text.



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