

News release

Preliminary *sigma* estimates for first-half 2015: global catastrophes cause economic losses of USD 37 billion; number of victims rises

- Total economic losses from disaster events reached USD 37 billion in H1 2015
- Insured losses from disaster events were USD 16.5 billion in H1 2015
- Natural catastrophe-related insurance claims were USD 12.9 billion in the first six months of the year
- 18 000 lives were lost as a result of natural catastrophes and man-made disasters in H1 2015

Zurich, 11 August 2015 — According to preliminary *sigma* estimates, total economic losses from natural catastrophes and man-made disasters reached USD 37 billion in the first half of 2015. The global insurance industry covered nearly 45% (USD 16.5 billion) of these losses, which is higher than the previous 10-year average cover of 27%. Around 18 000 people lost their lives in disaster events in H1 2015, up from more than 4 800 in the first half of last year. The earthquakes in Nepal, and a heatwave in India and Pakistan, claimed the highest number of victims.

Natural catastrophes caused total economic losses of USD 33 billion in the first half of the year, well below the USD 54 billion in H1 2014 and also the average first-half year loss over the previous 10 years (USD 99 billion). Of the overall insured losses, USD 12.9 billion came from natural disasters, down from nearly USD 20 billion in H1 2014 and again below the average first-half year loss of the previous 10 years (USD 25 billion). The costliest natural catastrophes for the insurance industry resulted from severe winter weather and thunderstorms in the US and Europe. In February, a winter storm in the northeastern US caused insurance losses of USD 1.8 billion, the highest loss of any event so far this year. Man-made disasters, meanwhile, triggered an additional USD 3.6 billion in overall insurance losses in H1 2015.

Earthquakes and soaring temperatures claim thousands of lives

Disaster events claimed many lives in the first six months of 2015. In all, around 18 000 people lost their lives. There were more than 9 000 fatalities in the earthquakes that struck Nepal in close succession in April and May, the largest loss of life due to any natural catastrophes so far this year. The quakes also left many people homeless. The economic losses in Nepal are estimated to be more than USD 5 billion. Of those, only around

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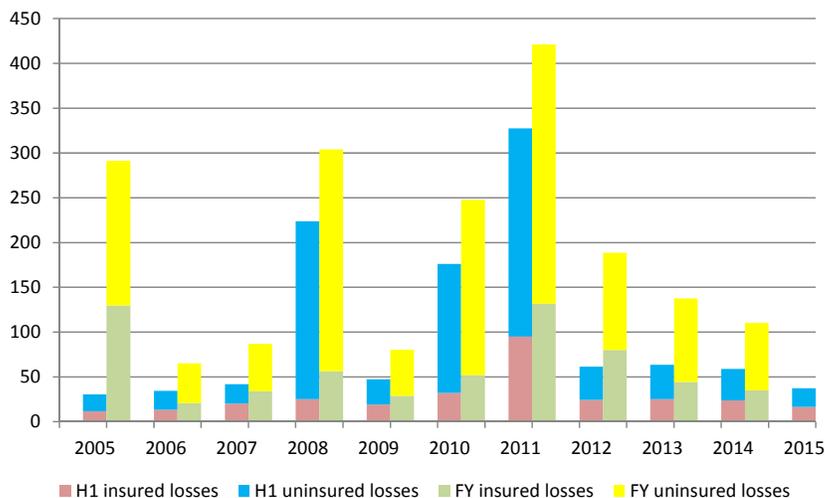
USD 160 million were insured losses.¹

"The tragic events in Nepal are a reminder of the utility of insurance," says Kurt Karl, Chief Economist at Swiss Re. "Insurance cover does not lessen the emotional trauma that natural catastrophes inflict, but it can help people better manage the financial fallout from disasters so they can start to rebuild their lives".

In the same region, India and Pakistan were hit by a severe heat wave in May and June. Temperatures soared to 48°C, the highest recorded since 1995. It is estimated that more than 2 500 people died in India and 1 500 in Pakistan as a result of the extreme heat.

Another factor in the high number of victims of disaster events in the first half of this year is the number of migrants who have died attempting to reach Europe from conflict zones in northern Africa, often in unseaworthy vessels. In search of a better life, sadly these people have instead lost their lives as the boats capsized while carrying them across the Mediterranean.

Figure 1: Catastrophe-related losses (USD billion)



Note: insured losses + uninsured losses= total economic losses

Source: Swiss Re Economic Research & Consulting and Cat Perils.

¹ The insured loss estimate for the Nepal earthquakes is subject to change.

Table 1: Total economic and insured losses in 2015 and 2014

USD billion

	2015	2014	annual change	10-year average
Economic loss (Total)	37.4	59.0	-37%	107
Nat cat	33.0	54.1	-39%	99
Man-made	4.4	4.9	-9%	8
Insured loss (Total)	16.5	23.6	-30%	29
Nat cat	12.9	19.7	-35%	25
Man-made	3.6	3.9	-6%	4

Source: Swiss Re Economic Research & Consulting and Cat Perils.

Table 2: The most costly insured natural catastrophe losses in H1 2015 (USD billion)

USD billion

Month	Insured losses ¹	Total losses	Event	Country
Feb	1.8	2.4	Thunderstorms ²	United States
April	1.0	1.4	Thunderstorms ²	United States
March	1.0	1.4	Winter Storm Niklas ³	Germany, Netherlands, et al
April	1.0	1.3	Thunderstorms ²	United States
April	0.8	1.0	Thunderstorms ²	United States
May	0.7	1.3	Thunderstorms, Flooding ²	United States

Note: (1) Property and business interruption, excluding liability and life insurance losses.

Source: (2) US natural catastrophe data with permission of Property Claims Services; (3) Perils AG.

The estimates in this release include all latest updates to source data made by 6 August 2015.

Notes to editors

Swiss Re

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The data from the study can be accessed and visualised at www.sigma-explorer.com. This mobile enabled web-application allows users to create charts, share them via social media and export them as standard graphic files.