

# Global Catastrophe Recap

January 2021

The AON logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the image. It consists of the letters 'AON' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background of the entire image is a dramatic landscape featuring a long, straight road that recedes into the distance. The sky is filled with heavy, dark, and turbulent clouds, suggesting an approaching storm or a catastrophic event. The overall color palette is dominated by dark grays, blacks, and a deep red overlay on the left side of the image.

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# Executive Summary

- Storm Filomena brings record cold & snow to Spain; economic costs top USD2.0 billion
- Atmospheric river events leave wind & flood damage in the U.S. West; damage tops USD875 million
- Cyclone Eloise strikes Mozambique as a Category 2-equivalent storm; 400,000 people evacuated



**105 mph**

Landfall intensity of Cyclone Eloise in Mozambique; strongest storm in the city of Beira since Idai (2019)



**15.30 inches**

Peak 72-hour rainfall in Las Tablas, California following a strong atmospheric river event ending January 29



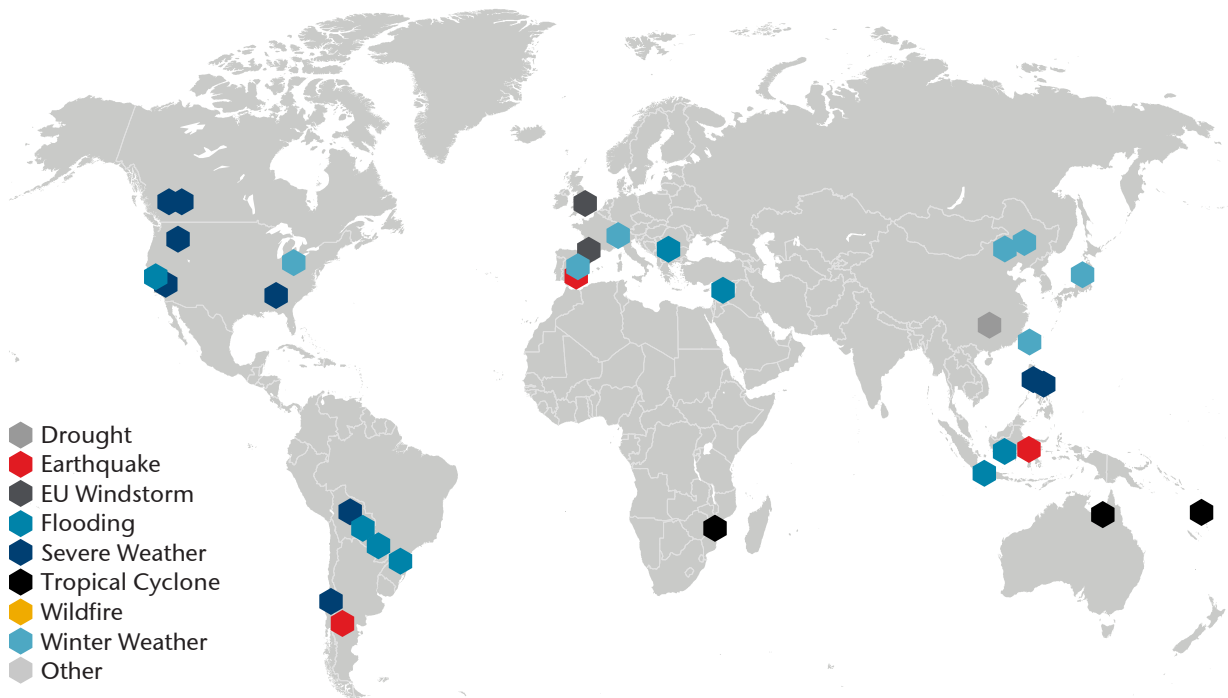
**-25°C / -13°F**

Minimum temperature at Molina de Aragón, Spain on January 12; Spain's coldest temperature in 20 years



**6.2**

Magnitude of the January 14 earthquake in West Sulawesi, Indonesia; 108 fatalities & 3,369 injuries



## United States

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/11-01/13	Severe Weather	Northwest	2	38,000+	525+ million
01/17-01/20	Severe Weather	California	0	24,000+	350+ million
01/24-01/27	Severe Weather	Plains, Midwest, South	1	Thousands	100+ million
01/24-01/29	Flooding	California	2	Thousands	100+ million
01/30-02/03	Winter Weather	Midwest, Northeast	4	Thousands	Millions

An atmospheric river and low-pressure system impacted the Pacific Northwest, Intermountain West and Northern Plains between January 11-13. Heavy precipitation coupled with high winds resulted in widespread power outages, flash flooding, landslides, downed trees, and property damage. Total economic losses were estimated at USD525 million. Slightly more than half was covered by insurance.

An unseasonably strong high wind event impacted central and southern California between January 17-20. Wind gusts across the Sacramento Valley, Bay Area, and Greater Los Angeles reached 60 to 70 mph (95 to 115 kph), with maximum gusts at higher elevations topping 90 mph (145 kph). Total losses were estimated at USD350 million. More than half was covered by public and private insurers.

A winter storm tracked across the central and eastern U.S., generating periods of accumulating snowfall, heavy rain, and severe weather between January 24-27. A deadly EF-3 tornado touched down in Alabama (Jefferson County), as severe storms impacted portions of the Mid-South and Southeast. A swath of heavy snowfall blanketed portions of Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Total economic losses were likely to exceed USD100 million.

A succession of storms impacted California between January 24-29. These included an atmospheric river which produced a deluge of rainfall across the California Coast, while blanketing the Sierra Nevada with significant snowfall. Flash flooding and mudslides enhanced by recent burn scars resulted in notable property damage. Additional damage and widespread power outages resulted from high winds. At least two fatalities were reported. Total economic losses were likely to exceed USD100 million.

At least four people were killed as a strong winter storm, which became a Nor'easter, affected parts of the Midwest and Northeast from January 30 to February 3. Significant snowfall and gusty winds accompanied the system, though property damage was less than originally feared. Total economic and insured losses were each expected to reach well into the millions (USD).

## Remainder of North America (Non-U.S.)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/12-01/14	Severe Weather	Canada	0	7,200+	120+ million
01/19-01/20	Severe Weather	Canada	0	4,000+	10s of Millions

Intense winds occurred across western Canada and the Canadian Prairies between January 12-14. The greatest impacts occurred in southern regions of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan as wind gusts topped 100 kph (65 mph). Total economic losses were estimated at USD120 million. A majority of the costs were insured.

A storm system tracked across western Canada and the Canadian Prairies on January 19-20. Damaging downslope winds and bursts of heavy snowfall resulted in a corridor of damage across portions of British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan - with notable impacts in the City of Edmonton (Alberta). Total economic and insured losses were each anticipated to reach into the 10s of millions (USD).

## South America

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/04	Severe Weather	Bolivia	4	Hundreds	Millions
01/16-01/20	Flooding	Bolivia, Paraguay	1	5,000+	Millions
01/18	Earthquake	Argentina	0	33,000+	100s of millions
01/21-01/24	Flooding	Brazil	2	Hundreds	25+ million
01/29-02/01	Severe Weather	Chile	0	Hundreds	150+ million
01/31-02/01	Flooding	Paraguay	10	Thousands	Millions

A torrential storm brought hail and life-threatening flash flooding to the Bolivian city of Sucre on January 4. The Minister of Government indicated that no less than 4 people were killed, 7 injured, and 6 remained missing. Substantial material damage was observed, including impacts to homes.

Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms generated widespread flooding across regions of Bolivia and Paraguay from January 16-20. Civil Defense authorities indicated 15,000 people were affected by the floods in Bolivia, and 5,000 in Paraguay. The greatest impacts were reported in the Bolivian Departments of Tarija, Cochabamba, Beni, and La Paz.

A magnitude-6.4 (USGS) earthquake struck San Juan Province in west-central Argentina on January 18. At least 3,000 structures were destroyed and 30,000 more were damaged. Additional loss was incurred to local infrastructure. The government allocated ARS10 billion (USD115 million) to re-build 1,800 homes in San Juan. The overall economic cost was much higher.

Notable flooding affected parts of Brazil between January 21-24. Infrastructure and property damage was reported from the Sao Paulo state on January 21 and the following days. Heavy rains in Santa Catarina beginning January 24 generated further damage and two fatalities. State civil defense noted effects of the inclement weather in 31 municipalities. Total economic losses were expected in the 10s of millions (USD).

Severe weather – including hail and flooding rains – affected central and southern Chile from January 29 to February 1. The greatest impacts occurred in the Santiago Metropolitan, O’Higgins, Valparaíso, Maule, Araucanía, and Bío-Bío regions. Total economic losses in the agricultural sector alone were anticipated to reach above USD150 million.

Significant flooding and landslides ensued in Paraguay after a period of heavy rain on January 31 - February 1, which followed anomalous rainfall throughout the month of January. At least 10 people were killed, and thousands of residents were affected. Among the worst affected were Paraguari, Cordillera, Central and Itapúa departments and the Asunción Metropolitan area.

## Europe

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/06-01/12	Flooding	Southeastern Europe	0	2,500+	10s of millions
01/08-01/12	Storm Filomena	Spain	4	Thousands	2.1+ billion
01/13-01/31	Winter Weather	Switzerland	17	Hundreds	Millions
01/20-01/21	Windstorm Christoph	Western Europe	0	Thousands	455+ million
01/21-01/22	Windstorm Hortense	France, Spain	0	Thousands	90+ million
01/23-01/31	Earthquake	Spain	0	3,400+	10s of millions

Heavy rain and snowfall in the first half of January resulted in notable regional flooding in several countries of Southeastern Europe. Among the most affected were parts of Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece.

A low-pressure system “Filomena” traversed Spain and caused severe snowfall, while a subsequent cold spell sent temperatures plummeting. Total costs of the disaster in Madrid, including business interruption and property damage, were initially estimated at nearly EUR1.8 billion (USD2.2 billion). Insurance payments in the agricultural sector, along with flood-related property claims reached into the tens of millions EUR.

Heavy snowfall in parts of Switzerland during the second half of January resulted in notable damage, estimated in several millions CHF. At least 17 people were killed by avalanches throughout the country.

An active cyclonic pattern in Western Europe resulted in notable wind- and flood-related losses on January 20-22, as storms named Christoph and Hortense affected the region. The most significant impacts from storm Christoph were due to flooding in England and Wales, and due to wind-related losses in France, Germany and Benelux. Windstorm Hortense mainly affected southwestern France, Corsica and parts of Spain.

A notable earthquake swarm affected Granada in southern Spain and the adjacent region in late February, with the strongest tremor of magnitude 4.3 on January 28. The national insurance consortium received more than 3,400 claims as of February 3, of which majority were residential.

## Middle East

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/14-01/27	Flooding	Syria	1	Unknown	Unknown

Notable flooding impacted Aleppo and Idleb regions in Northwestern Syria in the second half of January, affecting more than 300 shelter sites for the internally displaced (IDP). According to the data from UNHCR, more than 120,000 people were affected, one was killed, and more than 21,500 tents were either damaged or destroyed. The event further exacerbated a catastrophic humanitarian situation in the country.

## Africa

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/19-01/21	Cyclone Eloise	Southern Africa	25	35,000+	10s of millions

Cyclone Eloise made an initial landfall in Madagascar on January 19 before rapidly intensifying and striking Mozambique on January 19 as a Category 2-equivalent storm. Landfall occurred near the city of Beira, which is still recovering from cyclones Idai and Kenneth (2019). At least 25 people were killed and tens of thousands of homes were damaged or destroyed in Mozambique (30,000 alone), Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and South Africa.

## Asia

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
12/31-01/05	Flooding	Indonesia	3	2,500+	Unknown
01/01-01/31	Drought	China	N/A	N/A	27+ million
01/01-01/04	Severe Weather	Philippines	9	550+	10s of millions
01/06-01/08	Winter Weather	China	0	Hundreds	155+ million
01/07-01/12	Winter Weather	Japan	23	1,000+	100s of Millions
01/08-01/12	Winter Weather	Taiwan	18	N/A	Unknown
01/08-01/24	Severe Weather	Philippines	3	3,500+	25+ million
01/09-01/11	Flooding	Indonesia	26	11,000+	Millions
01/14	Earthquake	Indonesia	108	7,100+	60+ million
01/14-01/17	Winter Weather	China	0	Hundreds	115+ million
01/15-01/21	Flooding	Indonesia	21	26,000+	Millions

Heavy rains prompted severe flash flooding in the Indonesian provinces of South Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, West Nusa Tenggara, and Aceh from December 30 through January 5. Government officials cited that at least three people were killed and no less than 2,500 houses were either damaged or destroyed.

Below-average precipitation prompted drought conditions across parts of China's Guangxi, Hunan, and Yunnan provinces throughout January. Direct damage to agricultural interests was listed at CNY175 million (USD27 million).

A tail-end of a frontal system affected Philippines' Luzon and Visayas islands between January 1-4. At least six people were killed, and three others missing. More than 550 homes along with dozens of road segments and bridges were damaged to varying degrees.

A spell of very cold temperatures engulfed northern portions of China from January 6-8. The China Meteorological Administration cited at least 60 local stations which set new minimum temperature records. Notable freeze damage to crops were noted in Inner Mongolia, Jilin, and Liaoning. Total economic losses were estimated at USD155 million.

Heavy snowfall and blizzard conditions affected northwestern parts of Japan from January 7-12. As many as 23 people were killed and at least 394 others were injured. Agriculture and transportation sectors were heavily impacted. Total economic and insured losses were each expected to reach into the hundreds of millions (USD).

Extremely low temperatures and snowfall affected parts of Taiwan from January 8-12; the national capital Taipei was noted as the worst hit. Local media cited at least 18 casualties.

The tail-end of a frontal system affected Visayas and Luzon Islands of Philippines archipelago from January 8-24, resulting in at least three casualties. As many as 3,500 homes, 26 road sections, and 19 bridges were damaged to various degrees, and roughly 36,000 hectares (90,000 acres) of agricultural land was left inundated.

Seasonal rains triggered flash flooding and landslides in Indonesia’s Bandung and Sumedang Regencies in West Java Province between January 9–11. At least 26 people were reported dead or missing while 18 others were injured following multiple landslides in Cimanggung District. Notable inundation damage occurred to approximately 11,000 residential buildings, roads, and local businesses.

A strong magnitude-6.2 (USGS) earthquake struck Indonesia’s Majene Regency on January 14. Government officials confirmed that at least 108 people were left dead or missing and 3,369 others were injured. Notable damage to more than 7,100 homes and other structures was reported from Majene and Mamuju regencies. Preliminary damage costs totaled IDR822 billion (USD60 million).

An extended period of cold air engulfed northern sections of China from January 14-17. Total economic damage, primarily due to agricultural impacts, were estimated at up to USD115 million.

Heavy precipitation continued to affect the Indonesian Provinces of South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, and North Maluku between January 15-21. As of January 18, at least 21 people were killed and as many as 26,000 homes were either damaged or destroyed; majority of them were in South Kalimantan Province.

## Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific Islands)

Date	Event	Location	Deaths	Structures/ Claims	Economic Loss (USD)
01/03-01/07	Cyclone Imogen	Australia	0	Hundreds	10s of millions
01/30-01/31	Cyclone Ana	Fiji	1	Thousands	Millions

Tropical Cyclone Imogen – the first named storm of the 2020-2021 Australian region cyclone season – made Australia landfall near Queensland’s Karumba Town on January 3, causing notable flood- and wind-related damage in northeastern parts of Australia.

Cyclone Ana made landfall in Fiji in late January. Widespread flood- and wind-related damage was reported from the main Island of Viti Levu, with the capital city of Suva noted as the worst-hit. One person was killed and five went missing. Total economic losses were estimated to reach into the millions (USD).



## 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 public and private insurance entities 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 determined based on various public media sources, including news websites, publications from insurance companies, financial institution press releases, and official government agencies. Economic loss totals are separate from any available insured loss estimates. An insured loss is the portion of the economic loss covered by public or private insurance entities. In rare instances, specific events may include modeled loss estimates determined from utilizing Impact Forecasting's suite of catastrophe model products.

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