

# Asia's giants exposed to natural disasters - survey

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A firefighter uses a rope to rescue a group of 36 Chinese villagers stranded on a section of road destroyed by a mudslide in China's Sichuan province in July 2011. The United States and Japan have the highest bills to pay from natural disasters, but Asia's emerging giants -- China, India and Indonesia -- are proportionately at greater risk from them, a survey said on Thursday.

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British risk assessors Maplecroft ranked 196 countries according to their economic exposure to earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, landslides, floods, storms and wildfires.

Four nations -- the United States, ranked first, followed by Japan, China and Taiwan -- were deemed at "extreme risk" in absolute terms, which means the overall cost in dollar terms from a natural disaster.

Seven other countries (Mexico, India, the Philippines, Turkey, Indonesia, Italy and Canada) were rated as "high risk" in absolute terms.

But a different picture emerged when countries were assessed for their social and economic ability to cope with a disaster.

China, India, the Philippines and Indonesia were all in the high risk category, while the United States and Japan were rated low risk.

Seventeen countries, most of them African and headed by Somalia, were considered to be at extreme risk, according to the barometer of socio-economic resilience.

The survey, the [Natural Hazards](#) Risk Atlas 2011, looks at 11 indicators derived from data for 2005-2010 compiled by the [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF), World Bank and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

It does not include the effects of drought on national economies or the cost to agriculture from natural disaster.

"Natural hazards have been more costly to the [world economy](#) so far than any other year on record," Maplecroft observed.

"The tsunami in Japan, tornadoes in the [United States](#), the Christchurch earthquake (in New Zealand) and flooding in Australia have all contributed to a massive \$265 billion total for the first six months of the year."

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