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Headline: 9.7 million Filipino kids displaced by disasters – Unicef

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NIGHTLY GLOW SHOW | Children watch in amazement the lava flow and listen to the rumbling of rockfall at night that can be seen and heard from areas within the extended 7-kilometer permanent danger zone of the restive Mayon Volcano. This photo was taken in Barangay Matanag, Legazpi City, Albay, on June 22, 2023. (Photo by MARK ALVIC ESPLANA / Inquirer Southern Luzon)

NIGHTLY GLOW SHOW | Children watch in amazement the lava flow and listen to the rumbling of rockfall at night that can be seen and heard from areas within the extended 7-kilometer permanent danger zone of the restive Mayon Volcano. This photo was taken in Barangay Matanag, Legazpi City, Albay, on June 22, 2023. (Photo by MARK ALVIC ESPLANA / Inquirer Southern Luzon)

MANILA, Philippines — Filipino children aged 18 and below are the most displaced children in the world due to weather-related disasters from 2016 to 2021 worsened by the climate crisis, according to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).

"The Philippines is at the epicenter of this crisis, bearing the highest absolute number of child displacements at 9.7 million," the Unicef said in its report "Children Displaced in Changing Climate" released on Friday.

It noted that in terms of hazard, the Philippines ranked first for storms (8.3 million), and third for floods (1.3 million) in absolute numbers of children displaced.

The Unicef report was the first global analysis of the number of children driven away from their homes between 2016 and 2021 due to floods, storms, droughts, and wildfires, and looks at projections for the next 30 years.

Based on the analysis, there were 43.1 million internal displacements of children linked to weather-related disasters over the last six years, which is equivalent to approximately 20,000 child displacements per day.

The Philippines' figures comprised 22.5 percent — or more than a fifth — of the total number of displaced children worldwide.

India and China, the most populous nations of the world, followed with 6.7 million and 6.4 million displaced children, respectively.

Completing the top 10 countries with the most number of displaced children were Bangladesh (3.3 million), Somalia (1.7 million), United States (1.7 million), Ethiopia (1.3 million), Indonesia (960,000), Vietnam (930,000) and Cuba (670,000).

"Children are among those who suffer the most when they are displaced in times of disaster. They experience stress, lose days in school, get sick, and become more prone to exploitation and abuse," Oyunsai Khan Dendevnorov, Unicef representative to the Philippines, said in a statement.

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"We need to strengthen efforts to protect children at risk and support those already displaced," she said.

According to the report, floods and storms together accounted for 95 percent, or 40.9 million, of recorded total child displacements between 2016 and 2021.

Meanwhile, droughts triggered more than 1.3 million internal displacements of children, with Somalia, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan most affected.

Wildfires caused 810,000 child displacements, with more than a third occurring in 2020 alone, heavily affecting Canada, Israel and the United States.

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Using a disaster displacement risk model developed by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the report projected riverine floods could displace almost 96 million children over the next 30 years.