



Conflict Factsheet

2011 Floods in Thailand

Type of conflict
Main

Intensity
4

Conflict Locality
South Eastern Asia

Time
2011– 2011

Countries
Thailand

Resources
Agricultural / Pastoral Land



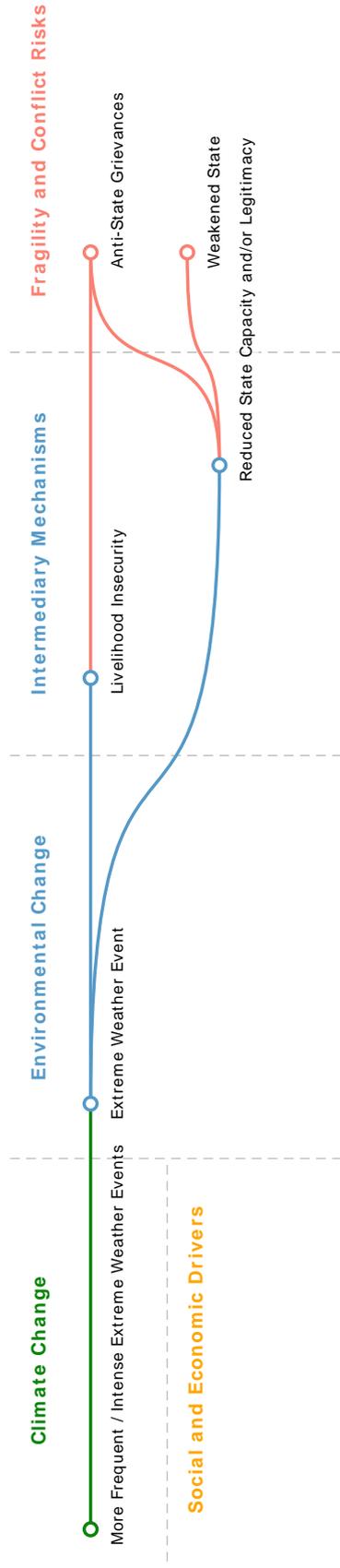
Extreme
weather
events and
disasters

Conflict Summary

Flooding which affected some two million people in Thailand in 2011, fueled civil resentment towards the newly elected government. The floods resulted from unprecedented monsoon rains, which damaged dams in over-capacity, purposefully filled to mitigate the effect of a weak monsoon season in 2010.



Conceptual Model



Context Factors



Agricultural / Pastoral Land



Unresponsive Government



Conflict History

In 2011, two million people across twenty-six Thai provinces were affected by floods caused by excessive rainfall which surpassed average rainfall of the last 30 years ([Femia & Werrell, 2011](#)). During the crisis, hundreds of civilians took to the streets to protest against discrimination by the Flood Response Operation Centre and the unfair distribution of water, electricity supply, shelter and food. Although collateral damage resulted from protests, there were no casualties. Public unrest persisted until a military coup in 2014.

The unprecedented floods of 2011 followed an unexpected period of minimal rainfall in 2010. Authorities shored up water supplies in dams around Bangkok and were unprepared to manage the unexpected monsoon rains. The floods occurred at a time when Thailand's political landscape was already fragile, experiencing violent anti-government protests between 2008 and 2010 ([Femia & Werrell, 2011](#)). Elections in 2011 brought a new government party to power, which was yet to prove its capacities in addressing class discrimination and deep-rooted citizen resentment.

Following poor emergency response from officials, angry civilians broke a sandbag wall in the north of Bangkok, which protected an upper class district from water surges ([Nindang & Allen, 2012](#)). The breaking of the sandbag barrier was an expression of public frustration at the government for their discrimination and favouritism of the upper class. Although the government engaged in a three phase recovery program that included addressing infrastructure to prepare industries and towns for future floods, the system of compensation was not transparent. After it was revealed that compensation was unevenly distributed on an ad-hoc basis, protests occurred again with demands for fairer compensation. Strong criticism of the government circulated for its poor disaster management and its inability to address the grievances of rural flood victims in 2010 ([Nindang & Allen, 2012](#)).

Compensation demands from flood victims were met by the government in 2012. However, disaster mismanagement revealed the government's discriminatory practices and unpreparedness to deal with the adverse effects of climate change, thus contributing further to destabilising the political situation in Thailand. Public discontent and controversy about the flood management plans continued but came somewhat to a halt with the military coup in 2014. The military government scrapped the scheme and initiated a review process ([Funatsu, 2015](#)).

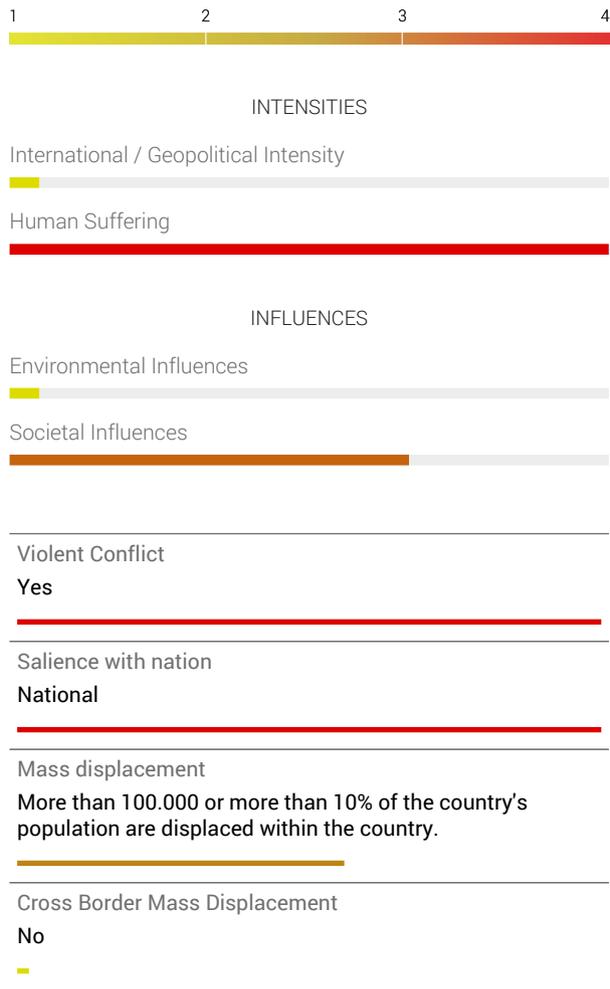
Resolution Efforts

The Flood Response Operation Center (FROC) was established in 2009 to deal with natural disasters ([Poaponsakorn & Meethom, 2013](#)). This was, however, ineffective in dealing with the 2011 floods and many civilians relied upon NGOs for relief. Flood victims were encouraged by the Stop Global Warming Association (SGWA) to bring their compensation claims against the government to the central administrative court ([Saengpassa, 2011](#)). However, many claims have been rejected by the court because of the sudden and unprecedented nature of the disaster, which meant that the government could not be held accountable for damage.

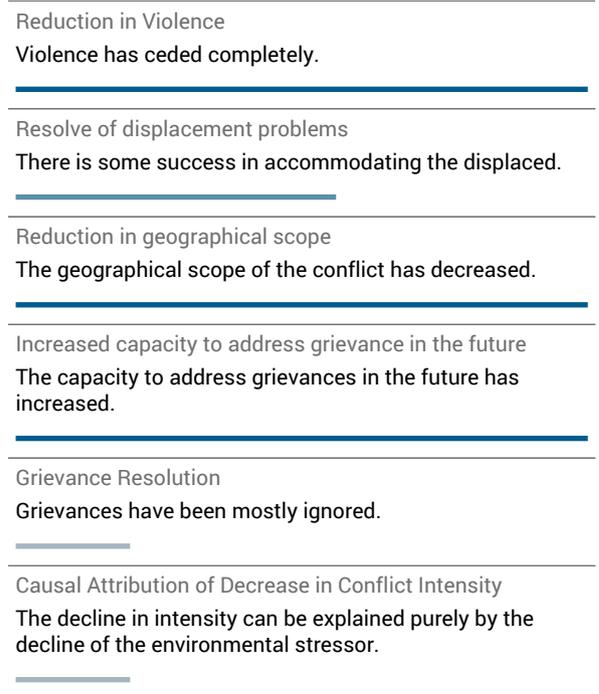


Three months following the floods, the government restructured its disaster response policy. This included three phases, which addressed infrastructure weaknesses and the building of dykes to improve drainage. However, the plan does not address the increased likelihood of natural disasters caused by global warming, nor does it address the effect of flood waters on land affected by drought - an increasingly frequent phenomenon in Thailand (Poaponsakorn & Meethom, 2013).

Intensities & Influences



Resolution Success





Entry Points for Resilience and Peace Building

Mediation & arbitration	1
Flood victims brought their compensation claims against the government to the central administrative court. However, the government was not held accountable.	
<hr/>	
Compensation	2
Compensation demands from flood victims were met by the government in 2012.	
<hr/>	
Improving infrastructure & services	1
In the aftermath of the flood, the government restructured its disaster response policy to address infrastructure weaknesses and the building of dykes to improve drainage. However, the plan does not address climate change consequences.	
<hr/>	

Resources and Materials

References with URL

[Femia, F., Werrell, C.E. \(2011\). Thailand Forecast: Floods, Droughts and Political Instability. The Center for Climate and Security Briefer. No. 06](#)

[Nindang, S., Allen, T. \(2012\). Ahead of Flood Season, Thailand's Communities Demand Greater Preparedness. The Asian Foundation](#)

[Saengpassa, C. \(2011\). Victims in Thailand sue govt officials for 1st time over flood ordeal. The Jakarta Post](#)

[Poaponsakorn, N., Meethom, P. \(2013\). Impact of the 2011 Floods, and Flood Management in Thailand. ERIA Discussion Paper Series](#)

[Funatsu, T. \(2015\). Organizational Reformation of Water Resources Management in Thailand: "The 2011 Thailand Great Floods" and endless reforms](#)

Further information

<https://factbook.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/2011-floods-thailand>