

Disasters pound North America in 2017

By Seth Borenstein, AP

North America couldn't catch a break in 2017. Parts of the United States were on fire, underwater or lashed by hurricane winds. Mexico shook with back-to-back earthquakes. The Caribbean got hit with a string of hurricanes.

The rest of the world, however, was spared more than usual from the drumbeat of natural catastrophes. Preliminary research shows there were fewer disasters and deaths this year than on average, but economic damages were much higher.

While overall disasters were down, they smacked big cities, which were more vulnerable because of increased development, said economist and geophysicist Chuck Watson of the consulting firm Enki Research.

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