

Climate not changing? Tell it to tsunami victims

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There's nothing a climate change denier likes better than a good cold winter. "Hey, how's that global warming working for you," they'll chortle as the sides of your nose freeze together in the latest Arctic blast.

First of all it's not global warming, it's climate change, and the changes are coming faster and faster with each passing year. If you want to know how "well" it's working, take a look at what the **earthquake and tsunami did in Japan** the other day. The early death toll was 350, with more expected. More than 500 people are still missing, 1,800 homes have been damaged or destroyed, billions of dollars worth of property lost. The earthquake that caused the tsunami was 8,000 times stronger than the quake that leveled vast areas of Christchurch, New Zealand, just a few weeks ago

It was just seven years ago that an Indian Ocean tsunami killed an estimated 150,000 people. See a pattern here? Extreme environmental events are on the rise. **The most damaging tsunami on record before 2004** was the one that killed an estimated 40,000 people in 1782 following an earthquake in the South China Sea. There were a few more significant tsunamis before 2004, but they were spaced decades apart. In 1883 some 36,500 people were killed by tsunamis in the South Java Sea, following the eruption of Indonesia's Krakatoa volcano. In northern Chile more than 25,000 people were killed by a tsunami in 1868.



Photo credit: **NYDailyNews** Kyodo/AP

The Davos, Switzerland-based Global Risk Forum specializes in identifying risks of any kind to society. The group's president, Walter Amman is convinced that **climate change will lead to more disasters** due to extreme weather. He told German's *Deutsch Deutsche Welle* that he believes that we no longer can or should argue that we merely register events more quickly and accurately than 20 years ago. "If you look at the number of those events over the last 10 years, then it is clear that they have increased in number," he said.

Some people won't believe the climate is changing until they see a polar bear raiding their backyard bird feeder. Hopefully, however, the majority will take events like the tsunami to heart and realize that things they do every day – what they buy, drive, burn, throw away – have a bearing on the life of the planet and everyone on it.