PAKISTAN
2024 Monsoon floods

acaps

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

In 2024, Pakistan has experienced an exceptionally intense monsoon season (typically from July–September), leading to extensive damage and casualties. In some parts of the country, rainfall levels have reached up to 318% above normal. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, rainfall during the first two months of the season was 60% above average (VOA 05/09/2024; ACF 24/09/2024; AP 13/06/2024). During the monsoon season, Pakistan typically experiences heavy rainfall and flooding, causing significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and agricultural land (IPD 15/07/2024). In 2024, these rains have increased the water level in various rivers, causing landslides and flooding in several districts (IR 02/09/2024).

From early July till 23 September, 368 people (including more than 150 children) perished from monsoon-related disasters, while 700 (including over 200 children) sustained injuries (ECHO 23/09/2024; IFRC 17/09/2024; STC 04/09/2024).

Since July, heavy rains and floods have damaged or destroyed more than 78,600 houses, over 500km of roads, and 40 bridges. The floods have destroyed about 58,800 acres of farmland, significantly affecting the livelihoods of farmers, and led to the loss of nearly 2,000 livestock heads (OCHA 11/09/24; ECHO 23/09/2024; IFRC 17/09/2024).

By 23 September, the rains and floods from the monsoon had affected almost 551,100 people across the country. The hardest hit were Balochistan and Sindh, with over 508,000 people affected in both provinces. On 1 September alone, heavy rains killed 13 people, injured 15, and damaged more than 1,000 homes in these provinces. The Government has since declared 13 districts as calamity-hit (ECHO 23/09/2024; OCHA 10/09/2024; IFRC 17/09/2024).

In Sindh province, the rains and flooding have displaced at least 143,200 people. There are no reported figures available for displaced people in other provinces, although estimates point to around 168,000 in Balochistan and 10,100 in Punjab (ECHO 23/09/2024; OCHA 10/09/2024; IFRC 17/09/2024).

By 10 July, Pakistan was hosting nearly three million Afghan refugees. Afghan refugees live in all the affected provinces, such as Balochistan, Khyber Paktunkhwa, and Sindh. 58.1% of registered refugees live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (UNHCR accessed 07/10/2024; AI 11/07/2024; AJ 10/07/2024). Historical data shows that repeated flooding has affected refugee camps by uprooting their temporary shelters and damaging WASH facilities (UNHCR 02/09/2022). The current flooding is likely to continue challenging refugees' access to basic services.

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

With the southwest monsoon period coming to an end, there is a decrease in the likelihood of heavy rainfall in the near future. This could lead to an improvement in the situation as stagnant water begins to recede. People may also be able to return to homes that have not been damaged or destroyed, and humanitarian responders can more easily distribute aid (WB accessed 01/10/2024).

Stagnant water that built up from the 2022 floods in many areas caused the spread of waterborne and vector-borne diseases in affected provinces, particularly in the poorest districts. Although the 2022 flooding was more devastating, similar situations, on a smaller scale, could arise with the current flooding if water stagnation persists (WB 28/10/2022; IFRC 17/09/2024; AP 05/09/2024).

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

The destruction of roads and bridges is challenging access to certain affected areas. By August 2024, several villages in Sanghar district (Sindh province) were inaccessible by road, with the community relying on traditional boats for essential mobility (STC 29/08/2024). Damage to facilities and roads has also restricted access to healthcare services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (ACF/HEADS 26/08/2024). Although there is little information on the physical constraints on humanitarian access resulting from the destruction of infrastructure, it is likely that it will significantly delay and disrupt the humanitarian response (IFRC 17/09/2024).

CRISIS IMPACTS

Shelter

The heavy rains and flooding have damaged or destroyed more than 78,600 homes. Many people have had to leave their homes, finding shelter in temporary camps or with relatives, with very limited access to basic services. Overcrowded temporary shelters lack basic amenities, increasing the risk of illness and creating tension between residents (ECHO 23/09/2024; ACF et al. 29/08/2024; ACF/HEADS 26/08/2024). Based on an ACF assessment conducted in August in the districts of Khairpur Mirs (Sindh) and Sohabatpur (Balochistan), 10% and 83% of the population, respectively, were in need of shelter (ACF 24/10/2024).

WASH and health

One of the most critical issues identified in rapid assessments was the need for clean drinking water. The floods have contaminated many water sources and damaged or destroyed various sanitation facilities, such as latrines. This has resulted in an increase in the practice of open defecation, further elevating the risk of spreading diseases. With the lack of functional sewage systems, the affected regions also face aggravated WASH-related difficulties (OCHA 09/09/2024; STC 29/08/2024; ACF et al. 29/08/2024).

Jafferabad, Naseerabad, and Usta Muhammad districts in Balochistan have experienced an increase in cases of diarrhoea given the contamination of water resources and limited access to potable water. In certain areas of Balochistan province, nearly half of the children under five have developed diarrhoea after the floods. There are also cases of typhoid fever and cholera reported in these regions. By 29 August, government departments, NGOs, and international humanitarian groups had launched vaccination campaigns to prevent the spread of diseases, such as measles and cholera (IFRC 17/09/2024; ACF et al. 29/08/2024).

In an assessment report published on 4 September 2024, more than nine out of ten people surveyed in the most affected area of Sanghar district (Sindh province) said that mosquito-transmitted diseases, such as malaria and dengue, were their biggest health concerns, while 75% were worried about waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea (STC 04/09/2024).

Education

By 11 September, the flooding and rains had damaged more than 1,300 schools and destroyed 228 in Sindh province. Floodwater was still present in 450 schools, preventing them from functioning. The flood-related school closures have affected about 230,000 students in the province (UNICEF 11/09/2024). By 9 September, 93 schools were serving as IDP camps for flood-affected people, further disrupting the continuity of school activities (OCHA 09/09/2024). While no specific data is available, the situation in other provinces is likely similar.

Prior to the monsoon floods, over 26 million children were out of school in Pakistan. The persistence of floodwater in schools raises fears of an increase in the incidence of school dropouts. Based on the UNICEF Children's Climate Risk Index, children in Pakistan face an 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change and environmental shocks. Because of the effects of recurrent floods, droughts, and extreme heat, children are vulnerable to respiratory illnesses, waterborne diseases, and heat exhaustion. The country ranks 14th out of the 163 countries in the index (UNICEF 11/09/2024).

Food security and livelihood

Floods have destroyed key crops, including rice, tomatoes, chickpeas, sorghum, and various vegetables, likely affecting food availability and prices. In Jafferabad, Naseerabad, and Usta Muhammad districts of Balochistan, the floods have also washed away fertile topsoil, which is crucial for future crops. Agriculture is the main source of income in these districts, which are predominantly rural. At the same time, the loss of livestock not only affects people's immediate income but also has long-term implications for food security and agricultural productivity (IFRC 17/09/2024; ACF et al. 29/08/2024).

The floods have had a severe impact on small businesses, especially those in the retail and service sectors. Infrastructure damage and the displacement of customers have completely wiped out or led to the shutdown of many of these companies (ACF et al. 29/08/2024).

The number of people in need of food assistance as a result of the floods is not yet known, but several rapid needs assessments across the country have identified food as one of the most urgent needs. Smallholder farmers (many of whom have lost their agricultural production) and poor households are among the groups most in need of food assistance (OCHA 09/09/2024; STC 29/08/2024; ACF et al. 29/08/2024).

In May, 7.9 million people were projected to face severe acute food insecurity – i.e. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse – during the July–November period. This figure has likely increased because of the excessive rainfall during the monsoon season (IPC 23/05/2024).

COMPOUNDING/AGGRAVATING FACTORS

The impact of 2022 floods

In 2022, floods claimed over 1,700 lives and affected 33 million people by damaging infrastructure, homes, livelihoods, livestock, and crops. Estimated damages exceeded USD 14.9 billion, with total economic losses reaching approximately USD 15.2 billion. The hardest-hit province was Sindh, accounting for around 70% of all loss and damage, followed by Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab. The 2024 floods have struck the same regions. The impact of the 2022 floods remains a significant challenge, with people still struggling to recover their losses. Some destroyed houses, schools, and public services have still not been rebuilt. Many farmers who had to finance their crops themselves and had taken out loans have gone bankrupt after they were unable to pay back the interest (WB 28/10/2022; CGIAR 19/04/2024; Think Landscape 24/06/2024).

Economic hardship

Pakistanis continue to suffer from economic hardship because of high inflation. The current extensive flooding is another aggravating factor that will likely result in the further loss of livelihoods (ET 15/09/2024).

Map 1. Affected provinces by August 2024

Source: IFRC (08/2024)