

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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1 December 2011

### PAK103865.E

Pakistan: The impact of the 2010 and 2011 floods, including on mobility, reconstruction, housing and shelter, employment and access to food  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### Floods of 2010

In 2010, heavy monsoon rains caused severe flooding in Pakistan as the Indus River overflowed (*The Huffington Post* 13 Sept. 2011; UN 28 July 2011, 17), affecting as many as 18 to 20 million people (*ibid.*; Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 4; *The Huffington Post* 13 Sept. 2011) and flooding one fifth of the country's land mass (*ibid.*; UN 28 July 2011, 17). According to a UN document reporting on the Pakistan floods in July, 78 of Pakistan's 141 districts were impacted by the floods as

waters tore down bridges, destroyed roads, submerged markets, flattened public buildings, wiped out electricity stations, and devastated 2.4 million hectares of cultivatable land. Over 1.6 million homes, over 430 health facilities, and an estimated 10,000 schools were damaged or destroyed. (*ibid.*, 17, 19)

The provinces worst hit by the floods were, in order, Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan (*ibid.*, 20). Flooding also affected "hundreds of thousands of people" in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan (*ibid.*). Although northern Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan experienced much more "violent" flooding than provinces like Sindh, "where the land is flat and level," Sindh was the "worst affected region of the country in terms of the scope and scale of the devastation and the prolonged emergency needs of flood affected people" (*ibid.*, 19-20).

Sources note that the floods killed approximately 2,000 people (Reuters 12 Sept. 2011; ICRC 26 July 2011; APP 19 Sept. 2011; Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 4). Oxfam reported that 2,964 people were injured (26 July 2011a, 4). The UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan also reports that, at the end of July 2011, there were approximately 14 million people still in need of humanitarian assistance (29 July 2011).

#### Mobility

The UN reports that although flood waters were receding by late 2010, "large tracts of Sindh and Balochistan remained under 3-4 feet of floodwaters" (UN 28 July 2011, 29). The UN also noted that because of the "vast" destruction of infrastructure caused by the floods, people faced "serious challenges," such as the inability of farmers to transport their items to markets, lack of access to locations requiring reconstruction, and the inability to "move freely due to open pollution from damaged drainage or sewerage systems" (*ibid.*, 30).

Oxfam, also reporting in July 2011, says that aid agencies were having problems accessing certain "remote or hard-to-reach communities" such as the Dera Ismail Khan District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (26 July 2011a, 12). As of January 2011, only 24,000 out of 84,000 households in the district had received assistance (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 12). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reports that, as of 28 February 2011, extensive damage to infrastructure (over 700 kilometres of roads and 141 bridges had been washed away in the northern areas), as well as security issues in parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have made accessing the province a challenge (UN 17 Mar. 2011). Similar issues restricted access to Balochistan (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 12) and Punjab (UN 17 Mar. 2011).

## Reconstruction

On 5 November 2010, the National Disaster Management Authority launched the early recovery program with the collaboration of the UN and other aid organizations (Pakistan 23 Feb. 2011, 1). In July 2011, the UNDP reported that, through the early recovery program, 3,097 community infrastructure projects had been completed (July 2011). Projects included "irrigation channels, foot paths, culverts, tube wells and hand pumps, street pavements, [and] link roads" (UN July 2011).

Oxfam's July 2011 report indicates that the "status of overall reconstruction work" is "unclear," and federal and provincial governments have not made public their plans for replenishing development budgets required for reconstruction (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 9). Refugees International, which returned to the country in July 2011, reports that although the emergency response to the floods was "largely effective," programs aimed at helping flood victims recover "have been slow to get off the ground, poorly coordinated and underfunded" (31 Aug. 2011). Oxfam also noted that the "[m]any factors which have hampered the relief and reconstruction effort are still present, such as an inadequate disaster management system and a lack of emergency relief co-ordination and leadership" (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 9, 1). Furthermore, "flood protection infrastructure, such as river embankments, protection walls, and water-courses" that were destroyed in the floods, remains damaged (*ibid.*, 4).

Oxfam also reports that the provinces bypassed the provincial disaster management authorities to establish their own bodies for handling reconstruction: the Special Reconstruction Cell in Punjab, the Steering Committee in Sindh, the Flood Cell in Balochistan, and the Provincial Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Settlement Authority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (*ibid.* 26 July 2011a, 9).

Punjab has reported that it is constructing 89 "model villages," while Sindh is planning to construct 1,000 villages with 200 houses each by the end of 2011 (*ibid.*). However, Oxfam argues that with the provinces "largely taking the lead in reconstruction efforts," there is a "risk of divergent standards and allocation of resources" (*ibid.*). For example, it reports that foreign governments are being told to build houses with "little co-ordination, standardisation, or regard for [disaster risk reduction] principles" (*ibid.*). Refugees International says that the failure of the provincial governments, UN agencies, NGOs and donors to commit to a comprehensive, realistic, cost-effective policy on shelter early on in the response led to inconsistent and often unsuitable housing interventions, overlap in some places and significant gaps in others. (31 Aug. 2011)

## Compensation scheme

The Pakistani government committed to compensating flood-affected households through a "Watan card" system (Pakistan 23 Feb. 2011, 8; Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 10) that delivers money through ATM machines (*ibid.*, 29). As of February 2011, the government says it had transferred 20,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) [20,000 PKR = 239.61 Canadian dollars (CAD) (XE 23 Nov. 2011a)] per household to 1.5 million households that are watan card holders (Pakistan 23 Feb. 2011, 1). However, according to Oxfam, there have been "multiple allegations of corruption, discrimination, and difficulties in access[ing the system], particularly for women" (26 July 2011a, 10). The aid organization reports that implementation of the system is "slow" and that people have not been given enough information to understand the system (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 10). As of June 2011, only the initial instalment of 20,000 PKR per household had been distributed (*ibid.*).

## Housing and shelter

Sources report that the floods rendered 11 million people homeless (Reuters 12 Sept. 2011; ICRC 26 July 2011), damaging or destroying about 1.6 million houses (Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 4; UN 28 July 2011, 19; World Bank and Asian Development Bank Nov. 2010, 20). The UN indicates that in late 2010 there were 50 camps in Sindh housing approximately 102,000 people, 15 "spontaneous" camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 12,000 people, and 44 camps in Balochistan with 24,000 people (28 July 2011, 29). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the Norwegian Refugee Council reported that in May 2011, "38,000 people remained in 30 camps in Sindh" (June 2011, 6). By July 2011, no "official" camps remained, but there were still "a few unofficial" ones in which the people there said that they were unable to return to their homes because of disputes over land (UN 28 July 2011, 29).

Oxfam reports that although the "vast majority" of people displaced by the flood had returned to their communities by July 2011, many had not, for reasons varying between "livelihood, debt, and protection concerns" (26 July 2011a, 10). Oxfam also notes that thousands of people had not returned to their villages and were instead staying in "pseudo camps" in urban areas without access to any assistance (26 July 2011a, 4). The UN indicates that some people were living in tents near their homes while they were being rebuilt (28 July 2011, 29-30). Refugees International says that although

relatively limited numbers of people remain displaced (approximately 300 to 400 families who are squatting nearby closed camps for flood-displaced families), [it] is largely due to a strict government policy of closing all remaining camps and prohibiting the further distribution of aid. (31 Aug. 2011)

The UN indicates that at the end of March 2011, early recovery planning efforts had dealt with 43 percent of destroyed homes; 200 registered agencies had completed construction of 25,975 transitional shelters out of 63,705, and 14,575 out of 173,664 one-room shelters (28 July 2011, 49). A May 2011 UNDP early recovery action plan shows that although aid efforts had provided 351,980 houses or shelters, 827,380 houses were still needed (4 May 2011, 8).

## Employment

Sources report the loss of more than 5 million jobs because of the floods (ILO 7 Sept. 2010; Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 4). Oxfam adds that there is "little work available" for flood victims (ibid.). According to the UN, "[t]he floods devastated agriculture, the primary means of livelihood for most of the flood-affected people. Around 2.4 million hectares of cultivatable land ... was seriously damaged or lost" (28 July 2011, 21).

The UN also reported that more than 50 percent of people employed in non-agricultural activity said that "their business or employment situation was 'totally affected' by the floods" (28 July 2011, 21). The floods "washed away shops, taxis, trucks, offices and markets" (UN 28 July 2011, 51). According to recent findings,

60 percent of households affected by the disaster describe themselves as without a main source of livelihood after the floods, and 53 percent of households report a 76-100 percent decline in household incomes. (ibid.)

## Employment-related relief efforts

At the end of January 2011, the UNDP indicated that it had distributed more than 7,000 packages of seed and fertilizer to farmers affected by the floods in Punjab (31 Jan. 2011). The International Committee of the Red Cross reports that it provided 600,000 farmers throughout Pakistan with machinery, seed, tools and fertilizer to help them restore their income (26 July 2011). In July 2011, the UNDP reported that it had provided 26,973 farmers with livestock and other materials to help them earn an income (July 2011).

In January 2011, the UNDP was also paying "tens of thousands of farmers" in southern Punjab to participate in a roadway reparation project to re-establish the link between markets and villages (31 Jan. 2011). The project took place in 15 villages of the Layyah area, assisting about 35,000 people, and paying 6 United States dollars (USD) per day for a five-day week of fixing 14 market roads (UN 28 Jan. 2011). More than 1,000 women in southern Punjab were also part of a UNDP project to clear debris from towns (ibid. 31 Jan. 2011). They received 176 USD for 50 days of work, and "many are using the income as start-up funds for small businesses" (ibid.). In July 2011, the UNDP reported that through its early recovery efforts, "[m]ore than 170,000 people have directly benefited from Cash-for-work schemes" that employed people to repair and rehabilitate their communities (ibid. July 2011).

The UN also notes that the International Labour Organization and the Ministry of Labour and Manpower are helping support "non-agricultural livelihood recovery" through

vocational training, short-term employment, the replacement of tools or professional assets, support for micro enterprise, support for micro finance for loan restructuring or repayment, and supporting identification for new outlets for employment. (28 July 2011, 51)

The UNDP also provided start-up capital and training to 6,130 local entrepreneurs (July 2011).

## Access to food

The UN reports that by the end of 2010, the World Food Programme (WFP) had supplied at least one round of assistance to 8.7 million people in 62 districts throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan (28 July 2011, 43). However, sources report that more than a million flood-affected people still need food assistance (Refugees International 31 Aug. 2011; Oxfam 26 July 2011a, 1). In Sindh, 72 percent of people are "acutely short of food," said Oxfam (27 Sept. 2011). A WFP-led survey indicated that the flood-affected districts of Sindh contained the "highest number of food-insecure at more than 2.4 million people," with Punjab at 1.8 million, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 1.2 million and Balochistan at more than 300,000 (UN 28 July 2011, 44). Approximately 3.6 million people affected by the flood are "deemed to be most vulnerable" because they are unable to recover without support (ibid.).

The WFP attributes a number of factors to the "sharp decline in food security," including economic uncertainty, increasing unemployment and high food prices (n.d.). Oxfam points out that with almost two thirds of the population spending the majority of their income on food, people are "vulnerable not only to rising prices but also to the next flood or earthquake" (26 July 2011a, 11).

## Floods of 2011

Sources list the following provinces as affected by 2011 floods:

- Sindh (Oxfam 27 Sept. 2011; *Guardian* 12 Sept. 2011; *Huffington Post* 18 Sept. 2011; Anglican Communion 21 Sept. 2011; UN 13 Oct. 2011);
- Balochistan (*Guardian* 12 Sept. 2011; *Huffington Post* 18 Sept. 2011; Anglican Communion 21 Sept. 2011; UN 13 Oct. 2011; Oxfam 27 Sept. 2011);
- Punjab (Oxfam 26 July 2011b; Anglican Communion 21 Sept. 2011); and
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Oxfam 26 July 2011b; *Guardian* 12 Sept. 2011).

According to the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), the 12 "worst-affected" districts in Sindh are Jamshoro, Mirpur Khas, Thatta, Tharparkar, Shaheed Benazirabad, Ghotki, Naushehro Feroze, Khairpur, Dadu, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allah Yar, and Sanghar (13 Sept. 2011). The Chairperson of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society listed the worst hit districts in Sindh as Badin, Mirpurkhas, Khaipur, Shaheed Benazirabad, and Dadu (APP 20 Sept. 2011).

A mid-September 2011 APP article reported that the government estimated that 5.3 million people had been affected by the floods (APP 13 Sept. 2011). Oxfam reports that by the end of September the floods had affected more than 8.8 million people in Sindh and 14,000 in Balochistan (27 Sept. 2011).

Oxfam reports that the floods have damaged 6.8 million acres of land (27 Sept. 2011), and destroyed 1.59 million acres of crops (14 Sept. 2011). The UN's IRIN news service estimates that 1.5 million houses were damaged and 3 million acres of crop were destroyed (13 Oct. 2011). According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 6 million acres of land and 1.45 million houses in Sindh have been affected by the floods; in Balochistan, 26,138 houses were either damaged or destroyed (UN 27 Oct. 2011, 1). The National Disaster Management Authority reports that the floods have killed nearly 300 people and that floodwaters in Sindh have damaged 7.9 acres (3.2 million hectares) of land, fully damaged 539,899 houses, and partially damaged 848,412 (APP 19 Sept. 2011).

In mid-September 2011, the APP reported the Sindh provincial disaster management authority as estimating that more than 279,300 people are living in "relief sites and temporary settlements" (13 Sept. 2011). The Chairperson of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society noted that there are more than 140,000 people living in temporary relief camps (APP 20 Sept. 2011). The UN's IRIN reports that in Sindh, 850,000 people live in temporary shelters (13 Oct. 2011). Near the end of October, the UN Temporary Settlement Support Unit noted that there are an estimated 123,392 families still living in 2,600 settlements (UN 27 Oct. 2011, 2). In Sindh, 1,000 schools are being used as temporary shelters for the victims; however, 76 percent of flood-affected households in Balochistan and Sindh have not received any shelter assistance (UN 27 Oct. 2011, 2).

The UN reports that three million people in Sindh and Balochistan need "immediate" food assistance and more than five million "urgently require agricultural support to resume food production and income generation activities" (27 Oct. 2011, 2). As of 27 October, 12,553 families from five districts in Sindh had received agricultural support (*ibid.*, 3).

Maps showing the area covered by the floods in Pakistan are available on the UN Institute for Training and Research website.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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**Oral sources:** Attempts to contact representatives of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society and Oxfam were unsuccessful.

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Date modified: 2013-07-17

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