



Islamic Relief
Australia



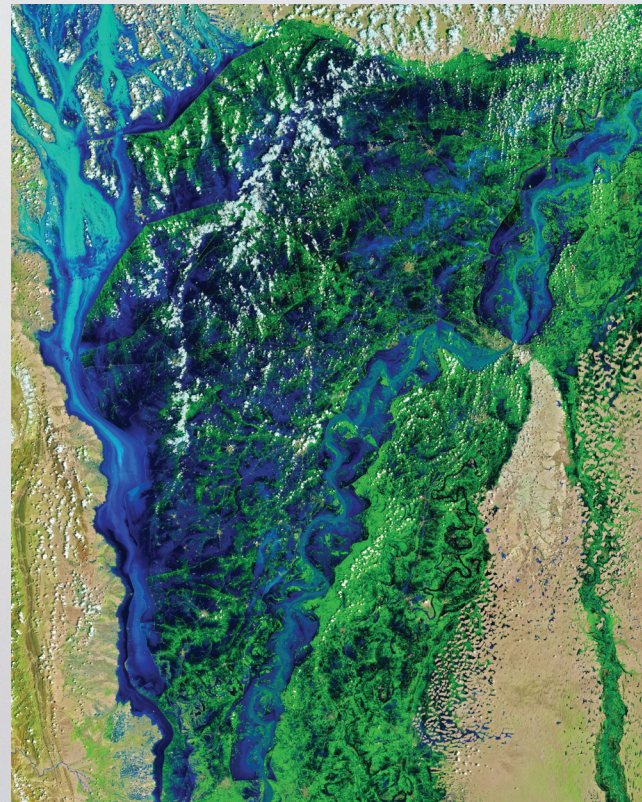
PAKISTAN FLOODS

SITUATION AND
IMPACT REPORT



NASA Earth Observatory satellite picture from 4 August 2022

Below: Inundated houses in Sindh's Dadu district – among the 2 million homes damaged or destroyed by the floods



Satellite picture of the same area from 28 August showing the dramatic deluge that submerged a third of Pakistan after two months of rainfall



“Because of these changes to the weather, we have experienced a massive loss of agriculture and horticulture, which is traditionally women’s responsibility. It is important that we act fast to save our crops and our fruits, which are disappearing. My husband is very sick and unable to work. I want to meet the basic needs of my children and make them feel comfortable, but to do that we need to build more technologies and implement strategies to overcome climate change.”

Village elder, Azad Jammu and Kashmir

CLIMATE CHANGE

THE CLIMATE DIMENSION AND PAKISTAN’S VULNERABILITY

A growing body of research and expert opinion indicates that these floods are part of a strengthening pattern of increasingly frequent and severe weather events linked to climate change, in Pakistan and around the world. Despite Pakistan being the fifth-most populous country globally, its contribution to global CO₂ emissions stood at a mere 0.88 per cent in 2020. Its emissions are only 2.01 tonnes per person — lower than all but 39 countries among the 198 listed in the Climate Watch league table.

A team of 26 researchers from 20 institutions who studied last year’s extraordinarily heavy rainfall in Sindh and Balochistan concluded that the five-day maximum rainfall in Sindh and Balochistan was about 75 per cent more intense than it would have been had the global climate not warmed by over 1.1°C since pre-industrial levels. They also found that the 60-day rainfall across the Indus Basin was about 50 per cent more intense than it would have been under unchanged climatic conditions.

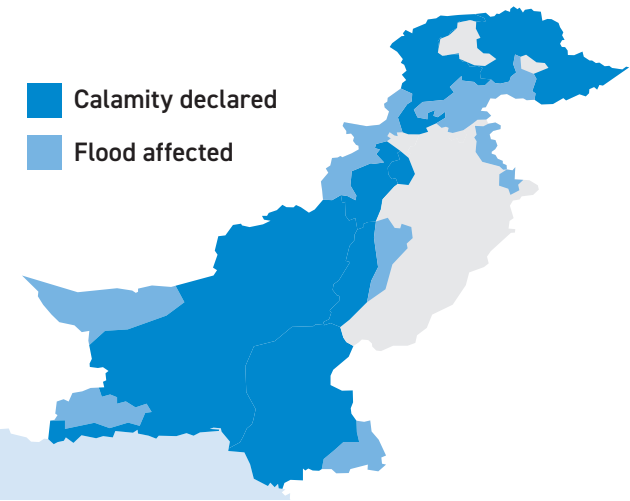
With each incremental rise in global temperature and the escalating severity of climate-related catastrophes, it is the poorest and most vulnerable people who bear the brunt of the suffering. They are the ones most likely to live in fragile homes and least likely to have savings to fall back on, or assets to sell, or any kind of ‘Plan B’ when floods hit.

A MONSOON ON STEROIDS

“The Pakistani people are facing a monsoon on steroids: the relentless impact of epochal levels of rain and flooding. Millions are homeless. Schools and health facilities have been destroyed. Livelihoods are shattered, critical infrastructure wiped out, and people’s hopes and dreams have been washed away.”

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, August 2022²

The government declared a state of emergency on 26 August. This map, right, shows the wide area of Pakistan affected³



From June and August 2022, Pakistan faced an unprecedented catastrophe as heavy rainfall triggered catastrophic floods, ranking among the most devastating events in the nation’s history. The impact was profound, affecting approximately 33 million individuals, equating to one in seven of the country’s population. The provinces of Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and Punjab bore the brunt of this disaster.

The aftermath of two months of relentless rain resulted in extensive devastation, claiming the lives of 1,739 people and displacing nearly 8 million from their homes and communities. The floods arrived at a time when Pakistan’s economy was already grappling with challenges, including a balance of payments crisis, mounting debt, and inflation due to post-pandemic supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions such as the conflict in Ukraine.

The financial toll of the floods was staggering, with economic losses and infrastructure damage surpassing \$30 billion, disproportionately impacting the province of Sindh, which accounted for nearly 70% of the total losses. Notably, critical sectors such as housing, agriculture, and transport suffered grave blows. Agricultural output was particularly hit hard due to the loss of crops such as cotton, dates, sugarcane, and rice.

Agricultural lands took a severe hit, with 1,784,126 hectares (approximately 4.4 million acres) of farmland damaged, and over 800,000 livestock lost. The floods devastated critical infrastructure, wiping out 780,000 houses and 8,330 kilometers (about 5,176 miles) of roads. This dual impact, alongside pre-existing crises, contributed to an escalation in external debt to \$125 billion and a staggering inflation rate of 38% in May 2023.

The consequences of the floods rippled across society. Prior to the disaster, nearly 40% of the population already lived in multidimensional poverty, and this figure increased further in the aftermath. Around 6 million people descended 20% below the poverty line due to income loss, asset and human capital damage, crop and livestock destruction, and rising food costs.

In the wake of the floods, food security emerged as a pressing concern, especially among the most vulnerable households and those who lost their livelihoods. A distressing 29% of flood-affected individuals—approximately 10.5 million—faced food insecurity by July 2023. Additionally, 2.3 million malnourished children were yet to receive necessary treatment, raising concerns about their developmental well-being.

Displacement and inadequate living conditions compounded the health crisis. Over 2 million homes were destroyed or damaged, leading to unsanitary conditions and contaminated water sources. Consequently, diseases like diarrhoea, malaria, and dengue fever surged. The destruction of health facilities—nearly 2,000—hampered medical care, while disruptions to immunization schedules led to an uptick in vaccine-preventable illnesses, including measles and diphtheria.

In addition to physical health issues, mental health challenges emerged as a significant concern. Over half of those affected by the floods reported psychosocial and mental health problems in their communities. This mirrored a trend seen in the aftermath of the 2010 floods, where a study found that participants displayed signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and were more susceptible to various mental health conditions.

THE IMPACT OF THE 2022 FLOODS¹²





FAMILIES IN LIMBO

Families across Pakistan are still living in poorly constructed shelters and makeshift accommodation a year after the floods — although some at least have robust family tents provided by Islamic Relief.

Karma Bibi (above) and her extended family were forced to flee for their lives when the floods reached their home district of Mirpur Khas in Sindh. All of their livestock were killed, and the picture shows what was left of their house when the flood waters subsided and they were able to return — just a few remnants.

“We are thankful to Islamic Relief that they gave us a temporary shelter [tent] which will keep us safe from the extreme heat and rain until our home is rebuilt,” Karma says. “Our whole family can live in the shelter. It’s better than nothing.”

One couple that Islamic Relief met and supported, Bilal and Bushra, built a temporary shelter on the same site where their house — completely destroyed by the floods — had stood. Due to a lack of funds, they were forced to use basic materials unlikely to withstand further shocks. Their temporary shelter lacks a kitchen or bathroom, which makes sanitation and hygiene a significant challenge for the family.

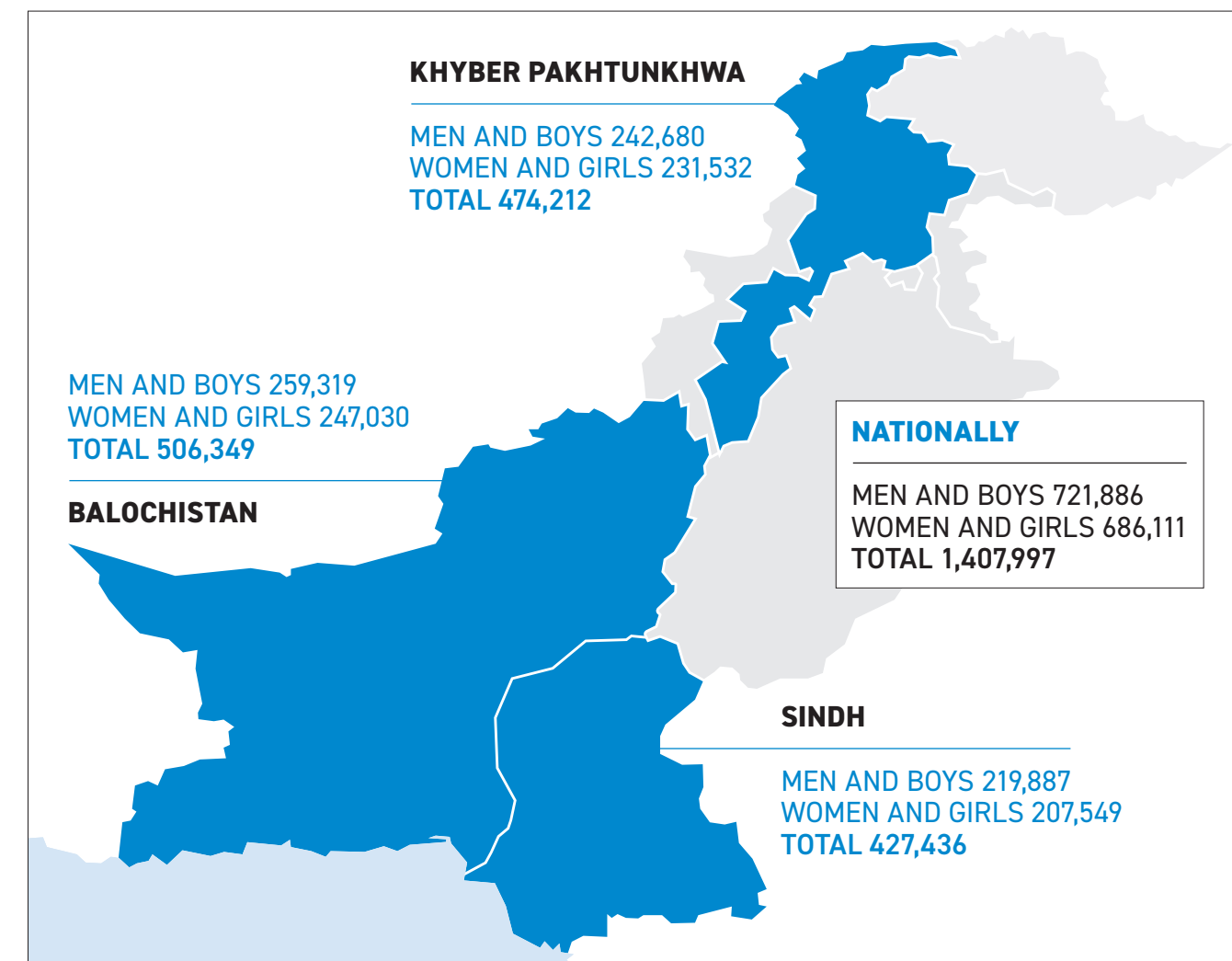
This is especially pertinent as Bushra gave birth to a baby boy during the floods. She went to hospital for the birth and had to pay for treatment before returning to the camp. “I suffered a lot,” she says. “We are poor, and it was very hard to afford in an already devastating situation.”

So many families recall being caught unprepared by the floods as they faced the deluge with no prior warning, underlining the importance of improving early-warning systems and communications with vulnerable communities.

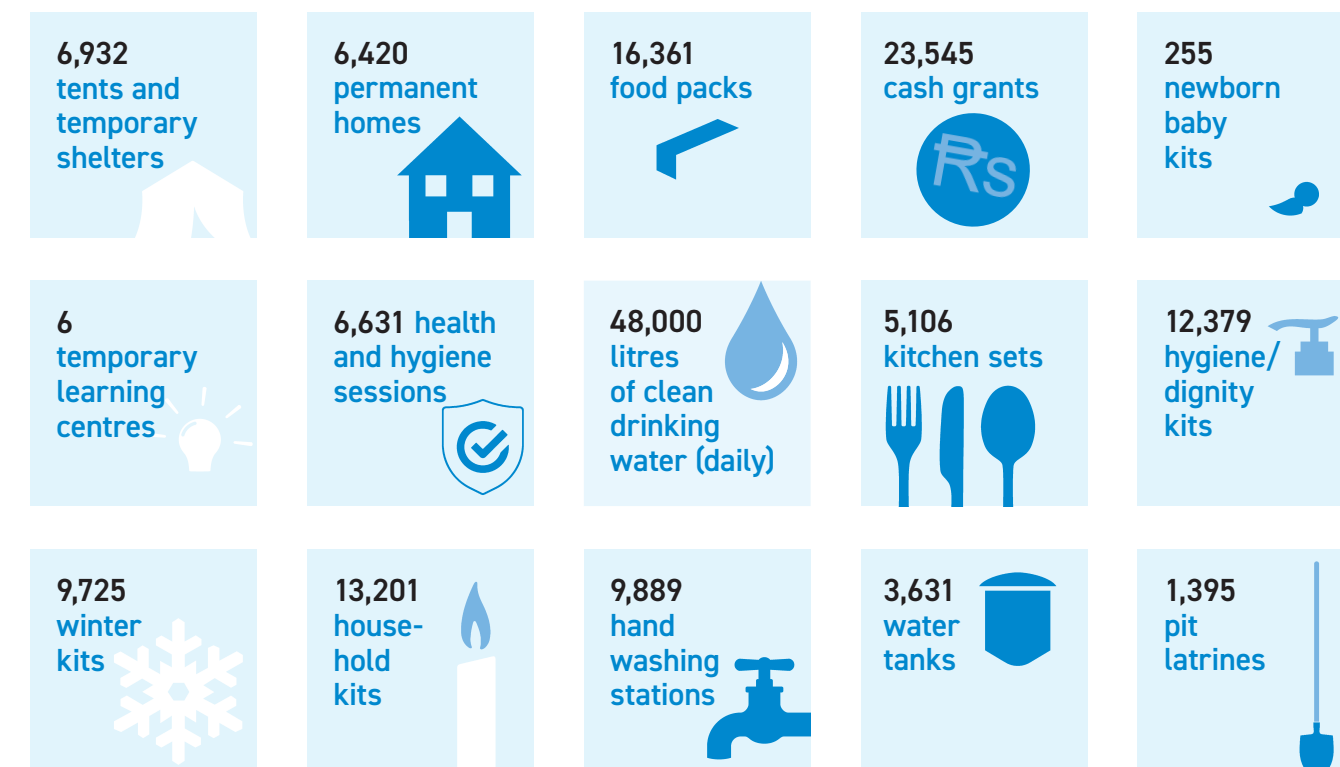
Pregnant and breastfeeding women are particularly vulnerable when driven from their homes by climate-related extreme weather events like the 2022 floods in Pakistan. Research shows that the prolonged stress they experience can increase the risk of premature birth, low birth weight and stillbirth



ISLAMIC RELIEF'S RESPONSE IN NUMBERS



Islamic Relief's emergency response had delivered aid to over 1.4 million people by July 2023



RELIEF, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE IN ACTION



Islamic Relief worked with the local community to build this check dam above a village in AJK, where flash floods had previously destroyed four homes and a mosque. The dam stood firm in the 2022 monsoon, protecting 20–25 houses from harm

“Climate change is a root cause of so much suffering, poverty and destruction in Pakistan. We are investing increasingly in disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation programmes that strengthen community resilience, and we must continue to press the international community to keep its promises on climate finance.”

Asif Sherazi, Country Director, Islamic Relief Pakistan

Any government would struggle to cope with a disaster on the scale of the 2022 floods in Pakistan. In leading the response, the country’s National Disaster Management Authority was and continues to be hampered by a lack of international support for the relief operation.

Donors covered only 73 per cent of the \$472 million (£390 million)⁴⁷ UN emergency appeal in 2022, and the \$344 million (£263 million)⁴⁸ appeal for 2023 was only 61 per cent funded by mid-July 2023.⁴⁹ Most starkly, the funds needed for nutrition and child protection programmes are less than 20 per cent covered, while over 90 per cent of the funds needed for education have yet to be committed.⁵⁰

Islamic Relief mounted an unprecedented relief operation as the rainfall records tumbled and floodwaters advanced. The tireless efforts of our emergency response teams over several months provided a lifeline to more than 1.4 million people across Balochistan (506,349), Sindh (427,436) and KPK (474,212).

PEOPLE

Those benefiting have included 686,111 women and girls – 49 per cent of the 1,407,997 total – and 5,653 people with disabilities. At the end of June 2023, Islamic Relief was listed as the seventh-largest contributor to the UN’s appeal for this year so far, committing \$8.3 million (£6.3 million).⁵⁶

Islamic Relief Pakistan’s approach to major climate-related emergencies is characterised by the four Rs – relief, recovery, resilience and research. The relief phase aims to save lives across as wide an area as possible when families lose their homes and livelihoods and face a heightened risk of malnutrition, dehydration and water-borne diseases. The recovery phase focuses on a smaller number of hard-hit communities to rebuild homes and restore vital infrastructure and livelihoods alongside ongoing relief efforts.

The resilience component is driven by the hard reality that as climate change bites, the poorest and most marginalised people will face greater hardship if they do not get practical support to prepare for the worst rather than just hoping for the best. Islamic Relief Pakistan invests significantly in DRR and climate adaptation programmes, aiming to ensure that some of the most vulnerable communities are less exposed to the ravages of climate change and better prepared when disaster strikes.

IMMEDIATE RELIEF

The relief phase of our response focused heavily on the fundamentals of short-term survival – food, clean water, shelter and sanitation (see page 20). In the past 12 months⁵⁷ we have provided 16,361 food packs, 6,932 robust family tents and other temporary shelters, 12,379 hygiene kits, and clean water for 550,000 people. In partnership with UNICEF, we were able to truck in 48,000 litres of water a day to families with no access to clean water and set up 3,631 water tanks for displaced people. We provided 23,545 cash grants to give the families worst affected the flexibility to prioritise their own individual needs.

WASH

We installed 1,395 pit latrines and 9,889 hand washing stations to help reduce the spread of deadly diseases such as severe diarrhoea, typhoid and the mosquito-borne malaria and dengue fever. We backed this up with 6,631 health-and-hygiene education sessions to keep people safe, and also set up six temporary learning centres for children who had been missing out on their schooling.

RELIEF IN ACTION

At the height of the floods Islamic Relief provided thousands of tents to people living out in the open. The tents were robust, high-quality and big enough to accommodate large families and their livestock. We also provided families cut off for weeks or even months from electricity and clean water with solar lanterns and water filters.

“We lived in tents for more than two months and we did not have clean drinking water there,” says Lachmi (above and below), driven from her home by the floods in Mirpur Khas, Sindh. “Even after returning home there was no clean water because all the water sources had been contaminated.

“Islamic Relief provided us with shelters and water filters, which have been very useful. We can now have clean drinking water, and we do not even have to do much for it. Everyone was getting sick before because of drinking contaminated water but this is helping us a lot.”



REBUILDING HOMES

As communities tackle the enormous task of rebuilding, the recovery phase of our operation has so far⁵⁸ provided 6,420 permanent shelters for displaced families and helped others to rebuild their homes themselves. In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) we launched a cash-for-work programme that has enabled impoverished people in Sindh to earn an income while repairing damaged infrastructure — such as homes, pathways, water pumps and irrigation channels — in their villages (see page 32 for details).⁵⁹

Our resilience projects and climate adaptation programmes are spread across all four provinces of Pakistan and the administrative territory of AJK. They began with an initiative to mitigate the impact of drought in Balochistan, a project whose success persuaded us to expand nationwide. Our initial focus in Balochistan was on making agriculture more sustainable in arid areas through the use of drought-resilient crops and climate-smart agricultural methods — a fusion of scientific innovation and indigenous knowledge that has come to characterise our approach. We also worked in partnership with the provincial government of Balochistan to improve drought early warning systems.

The projects we have developed and implemented in close collaboration with local communities include:

- using renewable energy technology to reduce reliance on fossil fuels
- planting indigenous trees and orchards featuring local drought-resilient varieties to combat deforestation and earn an income from fruit production
- building water storage ponds and water filtration plants and using drip irrigation technology to combat water scarcity
- building gabion retaining walls — metal cages filled with rocks — to protect soil and agriculture in hilly areas from destructive erosion during heavy rain
- constructing robust stone check dams to guard against landslides

RECOVERY IN ACTION

“The floods destroyed everything we had,” says 39-year-old Sher, who lives with his wife and six children in the Quetta district of Balochistan. “In the whole of my life I have never witnessed such heavy rains.”

Sher’s meagre crops were wiped out, forcing him to rely on an uncertain income from casual labour to feed his family, and his former home was reduced to a shell (above). Islamic Relief enabled the family to rebuild their house by providing them with the materials needed — a door, window, air vent, large bamboo canes, girders and roofing material.

When we provide building materials or build new homes for people — and we had built 6,420 by mid-July 2023 during the recovery phase — our aim is to build back better by ensuring that houses are flood and earthquake resilient and meet practical and cultural requirements in terms of living spaces, a kitchen area and bathroom.



RESILIENCE IN ACTION

This orchard of 100 apple trees is one of a number of fruit orchards established by Islamic Relief in AJK, working in close collaboration with communities and the local government’s agriculture department under a project called Green Actions for Protecting Biodiversity (GAP).

In each location we choose a fruit variety that has a strong chance of survival in the local environment and the potential to generate high yields, prioritising local indigenous varieties. In this case we and the community chose well — the orchard had a 100 per cent germination rate.

It is well known that trees and forests absorb and store carbon dioxide. When trees are felled or forests are cleared, the capacity to absorb harmful emissions is reduced, damaging the environment in the process. Forest loss resulting from deforestation and natural disasters accounts for approximately 10 per cent of global warming.⁶⁰

Projects like this one are good not only for the environment but also for creating sustainable livelihoods, providing healthy food and reducing the risk of people cutting down trees for fuel because they cannot make ends meet. Representatives of the agriculture department are providing training for growers, particularly women, and we are working with these communities to help them preserve and store their fruit — including learning how to make delicious chutneys and jam.





Islamic Relief
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