



## Pakistan

### ECHO FACTSHEET

#### Facts & Figures

- **Number of internally displaced persons (IDPs): approx. 1 million (OCHA)**
- **Estimated number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan: 1.6 million registered, and up to 1.5 million unregistered**
- **Food insecure population in Pakistan: 58% In Sindh 72%.(NNS, 2011).**
- **Global Acute Malnutrition rates are 15.1% - beyond emergency thresholds - with an estimated 3.5 million children suffering from acute malnutrition (NNS, 2011)**
- **Total European Commission Humanitarian Aid allocated for 2013: €52.18 million.**
- **Total European Commission Humanitarian Aid since 2009: €447.18 million.**



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#### Key messages

- The emergency needs of a million people internally displaced due to the conflict in the northwest of Pakistan and in the regions neighbouring Afghanistan, as well as those of millions affected by four successive years of floods, must continue to be addressed.
- The government-facilitated return process for the internally displaced people must be voluntary, safe and dignified.
- The process of safe and voluntary repatriation for Afghan refugees should be sustained, and their protection ensured, including the preservation of asylum space, alternative stay arrangements and resettlement.
- Protecting humanitarian space and ensuring neutral, impartial and independent action, in line with basic humanitarian principles, is a priority.
- With acute malnutrition rates persistently exceeding WHO emergency thresholds, a sustained, holistic, and multi-sectorial approach continues to be required to address the issue of malnutrition and widespread food insecurity in certain parts of the country, particularly in Sindh Province.
- There is a need to continue mainstreaming Protection, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development in the humanitarian response.
- The coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian response must be strengthened.

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## Humanitarian situation and needs

**The northwest of Pakistan** and the regions neighbouring Afghanistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), continue to be affected by **large scale internal displacements due to military operations and armed conflict**. In 2013, new security operations and rising insecurity in FATA resulted in the displacement of approximately 140 000 people. According to UNHCR, as of December 2013, almost one million people remained displaced with 10% of them staying in three camps (Jalozai, Togh Sarai and New Durrani) while 90% are living in host communities, mainly in the Peshawar Valley. It is estimated that almost 50% of the people displaced live below the national poverty threshold. Many of the Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are not registered so the actual number may be even higher. An estimated 24,000 people displaced from North Waziristan Agency (NWA) in FATA in January 2014 reportedly returned home following a discontinuation of the military operations. However, further airstrikes in February have again led to the displacement of more than 23,000 people from NWA to KP and into Afghanistan, with further displacements expected if the insecurity continues.

Pakistan is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. **In 2013, for the fourth year in a row, monsoon rains in Pakistan caused massive floods**. Almost 1.5 million people were affected in Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and – to a lesser extent - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, many of whom were already reeling under the impact of previous years' floods.

In Sindh, one of the poorest and most food insecure provinces in the country, successive floods have exacerbated an already critical nutrition situation. Pre-existing high levels of malnutrition, coupled with limited access to water, sanitation and medical services, have compromised the health and coping capacities of the most vulnerable communities. According to the 2011 National Nutrition Survey, 72% of the population in Sindh suffers from food insecurity, with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 17.5 % among children under five - well above the World Health Organization (WHO) critical threshold of 15%) - and over 1 million children acutely malnourished. Recent reporting has confirmed that there has been no reduction in these figures and the majority of districts in Sindh have GAM rates either approaching or far in excess of 20%.

At the national level, 43% of Pakistani children under five (around 10 million) continue to suffer from chronic malnutrition. Considering that this one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world, scaling up of treatment for acute malnutrition and complementary nutrition-sensitive interventions are urgently required. Under-nutrition and food insecurity need to be addressed through a sustained, holistic and multi-sectorial approach, and people's capacity to withstand the recurrent shocks needs to be strengthened, particularly in Sindh Province.

In 2014 severe shortages of food and water have been reported in south-east Sindh, due to drought. The region is experiencing lower-than-average rainfall. The drought in Tharparkar has claimed the lives of at least 122 children in the period December 2013- February 2014.

Two powerful earthquakes hit southwestern Baluchistan in quick succession in September 2013 causing extensive damage to life and property. According to official figures, the seven-plus magnitude earthquakes left 376 people dead and almost 200,000 severely affected. However, humanitarian agencies face considerable challenges to deliver life-saving aid to people in the most affected districts due to access constraints.

These crises go almost unnoticed, are rarely reported in the media and remain largely underfunded.

**The situation of 1.6 million registered Afghan Refugees and an estimated additional 1.5 million unregistered Afghans** also remains a matter of concern. Assistance for strictly voluntary repatriation and especially for the preservation of asylum space, as well as alternative stay arrangements and resettlement are key issues for ECHO. The Afghan refugee crisis has lasted over 30 years, with many Afghans born but unable to gain citizenship in neighbouring countries. It remains one of the largest and most prolonged refugee crises in the world. Despite a "Solution Strategy" document prepared by UNHCR) in collaboration with the three governments largely concerned (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran) in May 2012, the resolution of many issues is not yet in sight. In August 2013, the government of Pakistan agreed to extend the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for the Afghan refugees living in Pakistan until December 31, 2015.

# The European Union's Humanitarian Response

## CONFLICT AND NATURAL DISASTERS

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has been operational in Pakistan since the 1990s. ECHO has provided humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict and major natural disasters, including the 2005 earthquake and the devastating 2010 floods, which affected over 18 million people. It also provided much needed aid to people hit by subsequent floods in 2011 and 2012. Since 2009, the European Union's humanitarian aid to people in need in Pakistan has totalled over €443 million. Relief items have also been channelled to flood victims through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The European Union's current humanitarian actions in Pakistan focus on three separate but interrelated crises: **support for people affected by the conflict** and almost a million internally displaced persons (IDPs); **support for those malnourished and food insecure** ; and **support for Afghan refugees** living in Pakistan, mostly through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Response to natural disasters is also an integral part of the humanitarian commitment, together with disaster risk reduction.

In 2014, ECHO will continue to support people affected by conflict, under-nutrition and food insecurity through its INGO, UN and Red Cross / Red Crescent partners. It will provide food assistance, shelter, health care, access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and protection to conflict-displaced families in camps as well as to those living in host families outside the camps. Needs arising from new displacements will also be met in a timely fashion. It is also important to ensure that people in need who do not possess identification documents or are from areas not "notified" by the government as being conflict-affected, are included in assistance and protection efforts. Principled assistance, strictly based on vulnerability criteria, is ECHO's main concern for these displaced populations, and advocacy for a principled and sustainable return process will be maintained.

## NUTRITION CRISIS

Pakistan's serious nutrition indicators clearly point to the critical need for an expansion of live-saving interventions to not only support treatment of acute under-nutrition in the short to medium term, but also improve referral and nutritional surveillance systems, and support capacity building and coordination efforts. ECHO funding will enable aid agencies to provide food, key nutritional services and healthcare, along with food assistance and livelihoods support, to the most vulnerable and neglected communities, in particular children and mothers in flood-affected areas, in order to improve their nutrition status and make them more resilient to future shocks.

## SUPPORT TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

Fewer than half the Afghans refugees in Pakistan live in refugee villages (37%). The majority are living in rural and urban areas across Pakistan. ECHO remains engaged in the promotion of Afghans' informed decision-making around durable solutions and funds the repatriation process for those who choose to return to Afghanistan, on a strictly voluntary basis. In addition, ECHO supports protection activities including those aimed at preserving asylum space, on-going refugee status determination and resettlement efforts carried out by UNHCR.

## EU CHILDREN OF PEACE PROJECT

The European Union received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 and dedicated the award to address the needs of children in conflict around the world. The prize money has funded four projects under the EU Children of Peace initiative. This includes a project in Pakistan, where the funds provided learning opportunities for over 4000 boys and girls living in Jalojai camp, who were displaced by the conflict. For many of these children, whose families fled from remote areas of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), this was the first time they had access to education.

## **OUTREACH AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS**

ECHO plays a key role in efforts to strengthen coordination and common positioning among major actors and donors, with regard to humanitarian space, access and principled actions. ECHO supports coherent action placing the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at the centre of the coordination process.

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR DELIVERING HUMANITARIAN AID**

The increase in the number of attacks on humanitarian workers is of grave concern. In 2013, a rise in attacks on aid workers has been seen, many of them linked to the national polio eradication campaign. In addition to insecurity, a tendency is noted in which sectarian, and sometimes even political and military interests, take precedence over humanitarian considerations. Keeping track of and maintaining access to moving populations is needed to ensure their relief needs are met. This must be achieved in an environment of severe insecurity and overlapping crises where both structural and emergency needs are intermixed. ECHO will continue to advocate for:

- The respect of the independence of humanitarian actions. This includes the possibility to carry out needs-assessments in a neutral and impartial manner with vulnerability as the main criteria. It is important to take into consideration exclusion factors, including the registration process for IDPs and the landless, continued displacements and the need to ensure that returns are voluntary, access issues, administrative constraints, and security.
- The enhancement of the coherence and quality of the overall humanitarian response with more consolidated needs-assessments across all sectors, timely response and the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian actions.
- Ensuring a coordinated response from all key actors in the nutrition sector in order to tackle the acute nutrition crisis widely prevalent in the country, particularly in Sindh. Sustained commitment in the implementation of policies that take into account the multi-faceted dimensions of food security and nutrition combined with adequate investments towards resilience building is pivotal to address the nutrition crisis.

## **FUNDING**

In 2013, ECHO allocated €55 million in life-saving assistance to Pakistan, the second highest contribution to the country covering over 27% of the annual humanitarian funding (source: UNOCHA Financial Tracking Service, December 2013).