



# Pakistan

## Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 480,000
Percentage of total population	0.3%
Start of current displacement situation	2002 (FATA); 2005 (Balochistan); 2007 (NWFP)
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	Over 200,000 in Balochistan (2006); 900,000 in NWFP (2007)
New displacement in 2008	Over 310,000
Returns in 2008	Undetermined
Causes of displacement	Internal and internationalised armed conflict, human rights violations
Human development index	139

More than 400,000 people remained displaced at the end of 2008 by ongoing conflicts in three regions of Pakistan. New displacements had continued through the year, with hundreds of thousands of people forced to escape the fighting, though in some cases only for short periods.

In the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) the operations of the government's armed forces in search of Taleban and Al-Qaeda members have met since 2002 with violent resistance; the UN in September 2008 estimated that 200,000 IDPs in FATA were beyond the reach of UN agencies.

Fighting between the government and militant groups in FATA in summer 2008 led to approximately 20 per cent of the total population (an estimated 850,000 people) to flee from Bajaur Agency to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). A number of people displaced within Bajaur returned to their homes following the announcement of a ceasefire at the end of August 2008, but thousands remained displaced. In NWFP, armed conflict between government troops and pro-Taleban militants has also led to displacement since 2007. In NWFP's Swat district an estimated 50 per cent of the total 1.8 million population remained severely affected by the conflict and a large number of individuals were displaced within the district.

By late 2008, according to UN estimates, over 232,000 persons displaced by the conflicts in FATA and NWFP had been registered in nine districts of NWFP, including over 50,000 people living in 12 camps established in the safer districts of NWFP, and over 178,000 individuals living outside the camps. The actual IDP figures were estimated to be higher due to registration of displaced people outside camps having taken place in only 70 per cent of the affected districts. The displaced families outside camps were relying on the hospitality of friends, families and tribal networks while those in camps were receiving assistance from international and national aid agencies.

Many displaced families in NWFP were separated, as some members (mostly women and children) had fled to safe areas, while others (mainly men) had stayed behind to safeguard homes and livestock. This created additional risks for the many women and children displaced, with concerns of increased sexual violence and exploitation reported. The capacity of cities to absorb these people has been increasingly

exhausted, leading to ever greater competition for scarce resources and livelihood opportunities. In this context displaced girls, women, boys and people with disabilities have had limited access to support.

In Balochistan, displacement has been caused since 2005 by the government's military response to a long-running, low-level insurgency by tribal militants seeking to wrest political power and control of the region's natural resources from the Punjabi-dominated authorities. Between 50,000 and 60,000 people were estimated to be displaced as of April 2008. They were living without clean drinking water or health care, and displaced children were believed to be facing severe acute malnutrition; dozens of children had died due to malnutrition and diseases such as typhoid and hepatitis, while IDP women had died in childbirth.

Displaced and non-displaced civilians faced immediate risks to their physical security when they were caught in the crossfire between the army and insurgent groups. These problems were compounded in the immediate aftermath of their displacement by the lack of access of aid agencies to many areas. The government of Pakistan has prevented aid from reaching those displaced by the conflict in Balochistan, while attacks by insurgent groups on humanitarian workers in many areas have made it very difficult for them to access IDPs.

For IDPs in Pakistan to achieve durable solutions to their situation, the armed conflicts in NWFP and FATA would have to come to an end, and a political settlement prevail in Balochistan. In the meantime, although human rights groups have publicised the actions of armed forces that have led to the displacement of civilians, the government's response to their plight has been limited. There are no national policies or dedicated government offices in place, although ministries with health or children portfolios have responded to displacement in some areas.

In 2008, the government did allow UN and international agencies to become involved in responding to the needs of those displaced in FATA and NWFP; however further improvement would depend on a policy enabling nationwide access. The UN activated the cluster approach in response, but most international agencies have limited access to FATA and NWFP due to the ongoing insurgency, or in Balochistan due to government restrictions.