



Pakistan



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	At least 980,000
Percentage of total population	At least 0.5%
Start of current displacement situation	2006
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	3,000,000 (2009)
New displacement	About 400,000
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	125

Human rights abuses by Taliban insurgents, counter-insurgency operations and local sectarian and tribal conflicts have displaced a total of four million people in Pashtu-dominated Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) since 2008. By December 2010, according to international agencies, the number of IDPs in KPK had fallen to between 840,000 and 980,000 IDPs. Roughly half of them had been displaced during the year. The number of people internally displaced in FATA and other provinces was unknown.

In August, massive floods affected up to 18 million people living near the Indus and its tributaries. In KPK, the flooding destroyed areas where conflict-affected IDPs had sought refuge, heightening their vulnerability and forcing many to flee once more.

The 2010 estimate of numbers was based on an effort to profile the age, sex and location of the conflict-displaced population of KPK. The mapping found that men and women were equally represented among IDPs, and 60 per cent were children. Some groups were disproportionately represented, including tribal communities who had formed militias to fight the Taliban, communities affected by government bombing of Taliban-controlled areas, and Shia and Sikh minorities. 96 per cent of internally displaced households were headed by men, suggesting that most families had managed to stay together.

The profiling exercise also sought to assess IDPs' humanitarian needs and longer-term intentions. As of the end of 2010, between 80 and 90 per cent of IDPs were living in rented accommodation or with families, but the rest remained in camps, many of them among the most vulnerable IDPs. Most heads of displaced households had found temporary employment in their area of refuge, but struggled to pay for basic housing and services such as health care. Their monthly income had fallen as a result of their displacement, leading many to spend their savings and take on debt.

The flooding of farm land, compounded by the insecurity and curfews, had led food prices to double and food insecurity to become more widespread, though the distribution of rations had contained levels of malnutrition.

Internally displaced children faced threats including forced marriage, forced labour and sexual exploitation. Internally displaced women bound by purdah (honour) faced severe mobility restrictions which impeded their access to even life-saving

health care and other services, while their male counterparts were the targets of killings, forced recruitment and arrests.

IDPs were most unsafe during their flight from conflict, when many were killed by army shelling, summary Taliban executions and anti-personnel mines laid by insurgents, and also during their return journey: a Taliban suicide attack on a food distribution point in December 2010 killed more than 40 returning IDPs.

Almost two million people returned to KPK between mid-2009 and mid-2010. The rate then fell as local insecurity, the destruction of infrastructure and land disputes impeded further returns. In 2010, despite insecurity in FATA, the government persuaded IDPs to go back to their homes and assert law and order there, if necessary by forming anti-Taliban militias.

Poorer IDPs could not afford to remain in displacement and thus returned in 2010, while better-off IDPs from FATA bought land in KPK and sought to integrate there. Tensions grew in some areas as members of host communities blamed the IDPs for increasing insecurity and overstressing shared resources. However, these tensions were largely managed by local leaders.

The government continued to lead the response to conflict-induced internal displacement in 2010, with support from international donors and agencies. Around half of the people internally displaced in the first half of the year were registered and received food rations, non-food items and government cash grants. However, despite some important achievements, the government lacked a rights-based policy to guide its response, and the alignment of relief activities with counter-insurgency objectives made IDPs and returnees more vulnerable.

In Balochistan, armed conflict between the army and Baloch tribal militants over control of land and natural resources continued to cause large-scale displacement in 2010. The army fought against separatist militant groups, Sunni and Shia groups fought each other, and the Taliban attacked NATO supply lines to Afghanistan. Many of the people internally displaced, more than 100,000 between January and July 2010 according to the government, were settlers who it had encouraged to move to the province. Some 40,000 members of the Baloch Bugtri tribe remained displaced, but little is known about the displacement of Baloch groups as the government denied reporters and humanitarian workers access to large parts of the province.