

PAKISTAN

Floods



Briefing note
2 February 2022

KEY PRIORITIES

17,300

PEOPLE AFFECTED

500

DAMAGED OR
DESTROYED HOUSES

AROUND

3,500

PEOPLE DISPLACED

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- **Heavy rainfall, heavy snowfall, and sub-zero temperatures hit Balochistan province between 4–10 January, causing flash floods and landslides.** The worst-affected area is the coastal district of Gwadar in southern Balochistan. The highest levels of rainfall recorded were in Pasni (185mm) and Gwadar (121mm) subdistricts (the average rainfall in the district for January is 16mm). The floods and landslides killed at least three people and injured over 300 (NDMC 10/01/2022; Infosects 04/01/2022; Weather Atlas accessed 19/01/2022).
- **The Provincial Disaster Management Authority declared an emergency on 5 January in Gwadar and Pasni subdistricts in Gwadar district and Balnigor subdistrict in Kech district** (OCHA 11/01/2022). The national army, navy, air force, and coast guard and the provincial government are engaged in relief operations in the districts affected by snow and heavy rain in Balochistan (The Nation 13/01/2022).
- **The floods affected over 17,300 people (around 6.5% of the population in Gwadar province) in 41 villages within the Gwadar district and damaged or destroyed more than 500 houses** (The Express Tribune 07/01/2022; Census 2017).
- **Balochistan is the poorest province in Pakistan, with over 70% of the population living in poverty (nearly twice the national average).** This rate is even higher in rural areas (over 84%) (PPAF 13/04/2021). The province is underdeveloped; less than 24% of its population has access to piped water, nearly 25% does not have access to electricity, and less than 7% has access to the internet (Global Data Lab accessed 26/01/2022).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

- No further rain is expected until the end of January. Typically, February is the second-rainiest month in the district (Weather Atlas accessed 19/01/2022; Time and Date accessed 26/01/2022). Because of soil saturation, chances of further floods remain high.
- Over 70% of the population in Balochistan is living in poverty (Pakistani Government 24/02/2019). This is likely to delay house restoration and prolong displacement.
- Flooding is likely to affect agriculture (IG News 05/01/2022), affecting the food security of the population.

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

- Less than 30% of the roads in Gwadar district are paved (PPAF 03/01/2015), likely restricting access to services, particularly during winter.
- Poor transportation networks in Gwadar district (PCIS 06/2021) make access to service facilities difficult and expensive, particularly for people in rural areas.
- The overall security situation in Balochistan deteriorated significantly in 2021 (BoI News 04/01/2022; Eurasia Review 04/01/2022), likely posing further restrictions on movement and service accessibility.

NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Pakistan Air Force
- Provincial Disaster Management Authority
- Provincial Emergency Operations Center

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Islamic Relief
- Care International
- Mercy Corps
- Muslim Aid
- Qatar Charity

SECTORAL NEEDS

Shelter and NFIs

Most people in Balochistan province live in houses made of mud, and over 41% of the houses in the area have natural floors (Global Data Lab accessed 18/01/2022; Pakistan & Gulf Economist 17/09/2017). Mud houses are vulnerable to the effects of heavy rains and flooding (IDS 08/03/2021).

The floods damaged or destroyed at least 500 houses in Gwadar district, with an average family size of seven people per household (The Express Tribune 07/01/2022; Census 2017). This number adds up to around 3,500 people likely displaced. The needs of IDPs include tents, blankets, and warm clothes (OCHA 11/01/2022).

WASH

Less than 24% of the population of Balochistan province has access to piped water (Global Data Lab accessed 18/01/2021). This access has likely been compromised further, as heavy rains flooded the Swad and Shadi Kur Dams in Gwadar district. Floodwater that entered the pumping station led to a disruption of the water supply (Gulf Today 05/01/2022).

Nearly half of the population of Balochistan province does not have access to flush toilets and resorts to open defecation (Global Data Lab accessed 18/01/2021; Food Cluster 02/2019), which increases the risk of contamination of the open water sources used by most of the population, subsequently increasing health risks.

Food security and livelihoods

The fishing community makes up around 70% of the population in Gwadar district (The Diplomat 30/06/2020). The floods damaged fishing boats (IG News 06/01/2022; Daily Pakistan 05/01/2022), potentially affecting livelihoods for several months as a lack of funds will likely delay the restoration of boats (Pakistani Government 28/02/2019).

Prior to the current floods, around 20% of the population in Gwadar district was experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity or worse (IPC accessed 18/01/2022). High food prices, droughts, and locust infestations contributed to increasing food insecurity in the district (IPC 30/04/2021). Flooding affects the food security of the population by causing damage to crops, orchards, and livestock, thus reducing agricultural productivity and purchasing power given its impact on livelihoods (IDS 08/03/2021).

Because of the damage to crops, orchards, livestock, and boats, affected people are likely to have lost access to income-generating activities (GEO News 07/01/2022; The Nation 13/01/2022).

Health

Health services in Gwadar district are limited. There are three hospitals in the district, only one of which has a COVID-19 isolation facility with ten beds. Staff shortages also affect the provision of health services – there are only nine doctors and two nurses per 100,000 people (over 90% less than the national average) (WB accessed 25/01/2022; NHSRC 12/2020; PPAF 03/01/2015). The operationality of health facilities is further compromised by the insecurity in the province and physical damage caused by violence (Aga Khan University 28/01/2021), likely limiting the affected population's access to health services.

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Recurrent floods

Southern parts of Balochistan province are prone to flash floods. Torrential rains during the monsoon season lead to flash floods almost every year in the districts of Turbat and Gwadar. The Shadikor Dam near the town of Pasni usually overflows during the monsoon season, displacing or injuring people and damaging livelihoods and property downstream. The subdistricts of Ormara and Pasni in Gwadar are usually the most affected by these floods. Flash floods cause damages to houses, standing crops, orchards, livestock, and water supply schemes, affecting thousands of people and settlements and cutting and damaging road networks (PDMA accessed 18/11/2022; IDS 08/03/2021).

Earthquakes

Balochistan province is one of the most seismically active regions in Pakistan, making it susceptible to earthquakes and tsunamis (PDMA accessed 26/01/2022). The last earthquake hit the province on 7 October 2021, with a magnitude of 5.9. The earthquake severely damaged 300 houses, as well as communication channels, roads, and bridges. It also killed livestock and damaged agricultural farms, affecting people's livelihoods (Islamic Relief 10/10/2021; IFRC 17/10/2021).

Armed groups

Throughout 2021, government attacks against armed groups increased and were mainly concentrated in Balochistan province, while the attacks perpetrated by the armed groups in Balochistan rose from 44 to 77. The latter targeted health workers and government officials, including security forces and law enforcement personnel (Bol News 04/01/2021). Security risks potentially affect the provision of assistance, particularly through attacks on the national army involved in relief efforts.