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PAKISTAN

Flooding worsens situation for people displaced by conflict in north-west

Internal displacement in Pakistan's north-western Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa (KP) has continued for at least six years, but reached a massive scale from 2008 to 2009. As of the end of July 2010, there were around two million internally displaced people (IDPs), 1.4 million of them registered by the government. The flooding has particularly affected populations which had been displaced by the conflict. This crisis has heightened their vulnerability and may force many to return to home areas despite ongoing insecurity there or resettle in major cities.

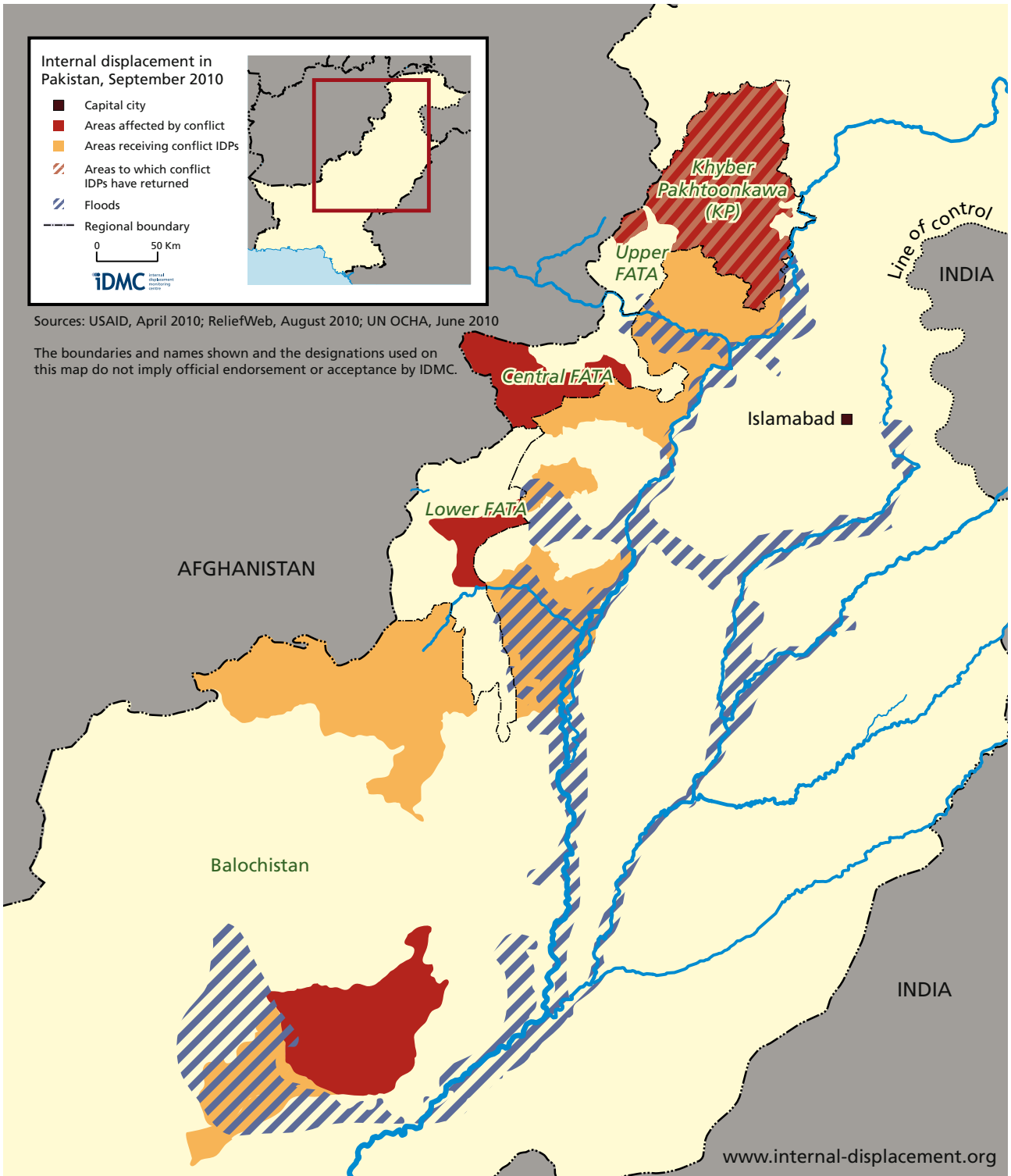
The causes of displacement have included human rights abuses by militant groups, conflicts between tribal leaders and militant Islamic rivals, and sectarian clashes. But military operations by government forces, sometimes in cooperation with some militant groups, have been the principle cause.

Men and women are equally represented; 60 per cent of IDPs are children. Some ethnic groups are disproportionately affected. Since the expansion of the insurgency and the government's counter-insurgency operations, short-distance displacements have become untenable. More IDPs have fled in fear of impending violence, and displacements have become more protracted. Moreover, as communities become ever more entangled in the conflict, local integration and return have increasingly become unsafe.

More than 90 per cent of IDPs live in rented accommodation or with families where there is an acceptable level of privacy. Host communities have gradually become less able to support IDPs, and more IDPs have been forced to seek shelter in camps. Most IDPs registered between early 2009 and mid-2010 have received better food and medical care than was available before the displacement. But those who have not been registered have relied entirely on their own resources and those of hosts.

Education in areas of displacement and return has continuously been interrupted by insecurity, destruction of school building and occupation of schools by people displaced by the conflict, or by the flooding which hit north-west Pakistan in August 2010.

The response to the displacement crisis, led by the Pakistani army, has been considerable. But the interests of IDPs have been subordinated to counter-insurgency concerns: some communities have had to negotiate with security forces to form self-defence groups as a condition for their return, leaving them at extreme risk during displacement and upon return. Insecurity, refusal of access and funding shortages have stopped international agencies reaching all the people in need.



Source: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org

Background

Pakistan became an independent state as a result of the partition of British India in 1947. The separation from India was based on the idea that different ethnic Muslim groups, sharing one religion, should have their own country. But, despite efforts to unify Pakistan, different groups triggered armed conflict in a search for self-rule. Pakistan today includes four broadly distinct regions: Punjab in the north-east, Sindh in the south-east, Balochistan in the south-west and the Pashtu-dominated north-west, divided into Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

This update focuses on displacement in north-west Pakistan, where conflict and human right abuses have generated displacement for at least six years (IRIN, August 2004; Dawn September 2004). FATA and KP have close and long-standing links with Afghanistan, including through ethnic and family ties. They have provided a safe haven for Afghan refugees; they were also a training ground for Afghan mujahideen in the 1980s and more recently a support base for the Taliban (NAF, April 2010). Grievances related to poverty, corruption, and lack of governance have led to violence in the regions, as have less visible factors such as family and land disputes and struggles for control of markets and trade (NAF, April 2010; Shuja, 2009).

Growing support for Islamic parties promoting Sharia law was prompted by dissatisfaction with a corrupt bureaucracy and an inefficient judicial system, as well as the Taliban's triumph in Afghanistan in the late 1990s and the labour migration to the Gulf States which stimulated a conservative interpretation of Islam (NAF, April 2010). However it was the US-led invasion of Afghanistan and attacks on tribesmen in FATA which most significantly propelled clerics promoting jihad onto the national stage (Shuja, 2009).

Militants established themselves as an alternative leadership to tribal elders, with the resulting conflicts leading to widespread displacement. The militants are rooted in Pashtun societies and follow local customs but are opposed to tribal structures and leaders whose understanding of customary law might hinder the establishment of Sharia law (The National, December 2009; LWJ, 2010).

Tribesmen, believing that the militants would ensure law and reduce corruption, have, on occasion, invited them to replace their tribal leaders (Khan Mahsud, 2010), but militants have also used violence to enforce a strict code of conduct and dress, and have severely punished those who refuse to comply (Jamshed, 2006; Shah/Bukhari, 2007). The militants have committed a range of human rights abuses, particularly against working women, tribal leaders and government officials, landlords and shop owners, teachers and health workers and their families (DT, April 2006). Thousands of people, mainly Shia and Sikhs, have also fled due to economic extortion by militants (DT, April 2009; Zeenews, June 2009).

Tens of thousands of people have been displaced by sectarian conflict (News, September 2008; NYT, July 2008). Affected sects included Shiite and Sunni groups and Deobandi and Barelvi Sunni activists (PSRU, April 2007; ICG, 2005; Khan, 2010). These groups share a history of clashes over control of land and water resources as well as important religious sites (PSRU, September 2008). Occasional clashes between tribal militias have also caused displacement (The Economist, December 2006). Tribal enmities have escalated into conflict (LWJ, 2010) amid ad hoc alliances between tribes, the army and Islamist militants.

In 2007, insurgents broke up regional feudal structures, forcing most of the land-owning elite to flee (PIPS, 2007; Asia Times, February 2009; NYT, April 2009). The rate of displacement accelerated late in that year (AI, June 2010), when Pakistan's security forces launched operations to counter

the perceived threat to national security, reinstate the feudal structure in KP and re-establish tribal governance (DT, May 2010; NAF, April 2010). The subsequent clashes between insurgents and security forces, and the government's economic blockade of tribal people living under Taliban control, displaced up to 4.5 million people between 2007 and 2010 (PHRP, February 2010; AI, June 2010; DT, May 2008; Dawn, November 2008; News, December 2009).

In August 2010, the areas most affected by the ongoing flooding are precisely those where people displaced by conflict and human rights abuses have sought protection. The number of deaths in KP is ten times higher than any other province (Oneresponse, August 2010). While it is still too early to know how the humanitarian and political challenges arising from the floods will be resolved, it is clear that conflict-induced IDPs are among the most vulnerable groups in flood-affected areas.

Meanwhile, in Balochistan, the Pakistani government and Baloch tribal militants have been engaged in armed conflict over control of land and natural resources for several years: the army has carried out operations against six separatist guerrilla groups and the region has also witnessed Sunni-Shia sectarian violence and Taliban attacks against NATO supplies. Many of those displaced have been settlers encouraged to move to the province by the government. Little is known about the displacement of Baloch groups since the government has denied journalists and humanitarian workers access to large parts of the province.

Displacement figures

In July 2010, the government reported that 1.4 million internally displaced people (IDPs) remained (OCHA, July 2010), but humanitarian agencies had documented significant under-registration (WHO, April 2010; OCHA, March 2010; McRAM, June 2010; DT, July 2009).

Until late 2008, few of the people displaced by conflict were registered, and there were few reliable estimates of their number. However, published estimates of between 910,000 and 1,430,000 IDPs between 2004 and 2008 give an idea of the scale of internal displacement even before official figures rocketed in March 2009 (AI, June 2010; PHRP, February 2010, pp.85-90).

Since 2008, around seven million people have presented themselves as IDPs to the authorities, who have registered half of that number as internally displaced. Almost two million people returned to their places of origin in KP between February 2009 and mid-2010, according to government figures (PHRP, 2010; OCHA, July 2010). Returns to FATA began during the spring of 2010 but have been limited in number (UNHCR, April 2010).

According to assessments undertaken by humanitarian agencies in 2010, the real number is 25% - 50% higher in some areas (WHO, April 2010; OCHA, March 2010; McRAM, 2010; DT, July 2009). This is mostly due to their lack of identification cards, the lack of registration facilities, or insecurity (UNHCR, January 2010; DT, July 2009; Dawn, November 2009; The News, December 2009). To qualify for registration, people also have to prove that they are residents of areas recognised by the security forces as being in the midst of ongoing conflict.

In Balochistan, displacement is currently escalating. 40,000 of the Bugti people displaced by the counter-insurgency in 2005 had returned by 2009, according to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, but 40,000 remained in desperate humanitarian conditions without outside assistance (Xinhua, March 2010; DT, January 2010; IDSA, October 2009; ICG, 2007). The government has reported that at least 100,000 settlers have fled Balochistan in 2010 due to nationalist violence (The News, July 2010; Gulfnews, July 2010).

Patterns of displacement

Men and women are equally represented among registered IDPs, and 96 per cent of assessed households are headed by men, suggesting that most internally displaced families have stayed together (Save the Children, July 2009). Children make up more than 60 per cent of their number (UNICEF, December 2009, p.2). Some groups are over-represented, for example Mehsud and Afridi tribes, Shias and Sikhs.

Until late 2008 most people remained near their homes (New York Times, March 2006; Dawn, September 2004). However, as militants took control of larger areas of FATA and the counter-insurgency operations escalated, short-distance displacement became untenable. The army required people to move away from the Afghan border to areas with a better state support and control capacity (Foreign Affairs, March 2010). Most IDPs thus fled further east to areas to which they had migrated seasonally, leaving large areas of the Pakistani side of the border depopulated.

Displacement has also become more protracted as the parties to the conflict have extended their territorial disputes beyond specific areas, and as more communities have been drawn towards one side or another (IRIN, February 2010).

The majority of IDPs have been displaced from rural areas to semi-urban or urban areas (FATA MICS, 2009, p.40). Obeying army or village council instructions, they have fled in groups, but have then lived among smaller groups where they have found an acceptable level of privacy. They have sought to avoid camps without adequate mechanisms to ensure *purdah* (privacy) for women, but as host communities have become saturated, more IDPs have been forced to seek shelter in the camps (The News, December 2009 and April 2010; DT, April 2010). The destruction by the August 2010 flooding of up to 40 per cent of the houses in reception areas has accelerated this trend (Reliefweb, August 2010)

Repeated military operations have shown that the period between official warnings of imminent operations and actual fighting has been insufficient to allow communities to flee safely. This has prompted more people to flee preventively over the last year (AEI, August 2009; Dawn, August 2009), allowing those with the necessary resources to plan transport, housing and employment. However, poorer and more vulnerable people have been unable to leave in advance, and have fled only when absolutely necessary (IRIN, April 2010; The News, December 2009). Initiatives to strengthen early warning systems were promoted by tribal elders in 2010 (The News, August 2010).

Protection issues facing IDPs

Physical security and integrity

The most insecure stages of displacement for Pakistani IDPs have been during their flight, due to the risk of army shelling, summary execution and insurgency-planted anti-personnel mines, and on their return to their place of origin. Human rights groups and the media have documented attacks on fleeing civilians, including army shelling and aerial bombardments (HRW, May 2009; al Jazeera, January 2010; Dawn, November 2009; IRIN, October 2009; Reuters, May 2009). Civilians have been killed by anti-personnel mines and by summary executions carried out by militants. The parties to the conflict have also restricted the movement of IDPs with curfews during the initial phases of displacement. They have imposed controls in the areas of displacement and even effectively confined communities in their home villages (FA, March 2010; IPS, June 2009; AI, October 2009).

The government has generally succeeded in creating a relatively safe environment in areas of displacement. However, since most IDPs have escaped from areas under militant control, IDPs have frequently been suspected of being part of the insurgency, and the army has regularly searched for militants in camps, arresting IDPs

who have later been released (Dawn, July 2010; DT, May 2009). IDPs have thus felt criminalized (DT, March 2010; The News, June 2010).

The government has also forced some internally displaced communities to form self-defence militias to support the security forces, as a condition for their return. This has put IDPs at extreme risk (Globe, January 2010; PTI, January 2010; ET, May 2010). In April 2010, two suicide bombers blew themselves up at the Kacha Pukha camp, killing at least 42 IDPs who were queueing to collect food rations (IRIN, April 2010). Police commanders confirmed that the suicide bombers were targeting members of tribes whose leaders had agreed to form militias (LWJ, April 2010; DT, April 2010).

Access to basic needs

Most IDPs have struggled to find employment and to pay for basic services (StC, July 2009). Monthly income per household drastically decreased as a result of displacement, and 67 per cent earned fewer than \$12 per month in 2009, according to a UN study (CERINA, November 2009, p.26). Until late 2008, when systematic state and international assistance to conflict-induced IDPs began, only host communities provided food and shelter to the displaced (IRIN, August 2004; DT, August 2004; Nation, October 2009; WFP, February 2007). By 2010, however, their resources had become overstretched, and host families increasingly found themselves too poor to support themselves, let alone to help IDPs (CERINA, 2009; Nation, October 2009; DT, April 2010). Aid workers reported in August 2010 that families sheltering people displaced by conflict have also been hit by the flooding and may now need help themselves (AlertNet, August 2010).

Food insecurity has progressively increased, with food prices doubling as a result of curfews, flooding, insecurity and the destruction of infrastructure (WFP, April 2010; FAO, August 2010). The government provided cash cards to each internally displaced household, and the World Food

Programme (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross / Red Crescent (ICRC) and other agencies distributed food to up to 2.7 million IDPs throughout 2009 (WFP, November 2009; OCHA, May 2010; The News, April 2010 and February 2010). These measures significantly reduced malnutrition among children; however, it has been reported that access restrictions to some of the flood-affected areas in KP have led to starvation (DT, August 2010).

The pressure on health care services in areas receiving IDPs was extremely high (McRAM, 2010). The Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO) have coordinated a response which provided services to up to 600,000 patients per month (WHO, May 2010). Restrictions on the movement of women have impeded their access and that of their children to health services (PHRP, February 2010; CERINA, 2009, p.45; IRIN, May 2009 and April 2010; ACT, June 2009), but immunisation rates of displaced children have still been higher than prior to their displacement, and there have been almost no epidemics (FATA MICS, 2009, p.35; CERINA, 2009 p.45; PHRP, 2010). The risk of water-borne diseases due to flooding had been controlled as of mid-August (ET, August 2010; NCRP, August 2010).

Vulnerable groups

Many women have been traumatised by their displacement experience (Kakar, 2009). They have been at greater risk of sexual violence including rape, and of being forced into prostitution by the loss of their livelihoods and support networks (AI, June 2010, p.40).

Men face other challenges. Reports of arrests refer almost exclusively to internally displaced men. Displaced men also are the victims of most killings (IRIN, January 2010; The News, January 2010), and displaced men and boys are at higher risk of forced recruitment (CSUCS, 2009; CRIN, 2008). As restrictions on women's mobility make entire families dependent on male members, these

threats have a heightened impact (PHRP, 2010; IRIN, December 2009).

Pakistan's internally displaced children face a range of threats: apart from forced marriage, they face increased rates of domestic violence and sexual exploitation during displacement (IDMC, June 2010).

Obstacles to durable solutions

Returns have not always been voluntary (Dawn, February 2009), and they have not always coincided with the removal of militants or the end of military activity. Insecurity has been observed before, during and after return processes (Reuters, March 2010; Dawn, July 2009; IRIN, March 2010). Destruction of infrastructure and loss of property have also barred the return of many internally displaced households (OCHA, July 2010).

Months after returning to the Swat Valley and other areas of KP, returnees were still struggling to rebuild their lives and livelihoods, in particular female-headed households. Infrastructure was still in ruins, and health care facilities were inadequate (IRIN, December 2009 and January 2010; Dawn, July 2009). More recently, millions of acres of farmland and hundreds of thousands of homes having been destroyed by the flood (Reliefweb, August 2010). Many IDPs had only just recently resumed farming activities when their land was destroyed by the floods (IRIN, August 2010). Efforts to make sustainable return or local integration feasible have been set back by from five to ten years, according to aid workers (AlertNet, August 2010).

While half of 450 damaged schools had been repaired (CERINA, 2009; OCHA, October 2009), threats by militants against students, teachers and school managers, particularly affecting women and girls, have remained widespread (UNESCO, February 2010). In 2010, secondary schools were

still not accessible to many children: in one area only 3.5 per cent of boys and no girls at all had enrolled. The flooding caused 1,000 schools to be converted into temporary camps, but they were intended to return to their original use by late August (DT, August, 2010).

Although the government has promised greater investment in areas from which people were displaced, there have been few indications of effective remedies for people who have suffered human rights violations related to their displacement. Problems related to access to justice, reparations and information about the causes of violations are yet to be resolved (Cost of Conflict, 2009; The News, December 2009 and June, 2010).

The interests of IDPs have also been given less priority than counter-insurgency concerns (FA, March 2010; ICG, 2009; DT, May 2010; Reuters, March 2010). Rather than promoting peace-building, the government has continued to encourage displaced communities to arm and fight militant insurgents (Dawn, April 2010; IRIN, May 2010). These developments will probably polarise Pashtun society even further and make a sustainable solution more difficult (ET, April 2010).

The polarization of communities and the lack of access to livelihoods have combined to make it harder for IDPs to integrate locally. Tensions have grown between IDPs and host communities as the latter's resources have run out or been destroyed by flooding (IRIN, April 2010; Dawn, April 2010; AEI, May 2010; Alertnet, August 2010). Some tribal people have faced discrimination because of their rural background and low social standing (National, November 2009; AFP, October 2009), or because they hail from insurgency areas. If these tensions persist, IDPs risk losing not only immediate assistance, but also their most important source of seasonal work during times of peace.

As a result of the flooding, it is likely that more IDPs will be forced to return to their home areas

despite insecurity there. Resettlement in areas less affected by the conflict and the flood is an option for those families who might find jobs in Karachi, Islamabad or other places where there are considerable Pashtun communities. However, since electoral policies and quotas are partly defined along ethnic lines in Pakistan, the large-scale resettlement of Pashtun people in Sindh or Punjab may be blocked (The News, May 2010; IPS, June 2009).

National and international responses

Pakistan's government failed to respond to the conflict-induced displacement crisis between 2004 and 2008. But since then, in tandem with international agencies, it has provided support to a huge number of IDPs.

Its achievements include the registration of more than half a million internally displaced households; the provision of food and non-food items to the majority of those households; of national identity cards to almost 80,000 displaced women; of health care services to many of those residing in displacement-affected communities, and shelter for many of the most vulnerable IDPs in camps. Cash cards distributed to at least 320,000 households have been an efficient means of reaching IDPs outside camps (UNHCR, January 2010).

More recently, the flooding has necessitated an even larger response, while itself presenting new problems: for example: damaged roads and bridges have made access a problem. Jalozi camp, for example, with a population of over 100,000 IDPs, was cut off for three days after a main bridge linking the camp was destroyed (Nation, August 2010). Local communities and relief charities have moved swiftly to help the victims (Reuters, August 2010; The Economist, August 2010).

Although it receives foreign financial support and the advice of UNHCR, the government has actively

managed the response to internal displacement (Dawn, January 2010; SSG 2010). While the UN Humanitarian Coordinator's office, Special Envoy's Office and OCHA have coordinated international agencies, other national authorities as well as international agencies have assumed sector-specific responsibilities (PHRP, 2010).

However, the government has been driven above all by the army's concern to avoid collateral damage during operations against militants (Dawn, June 2009). Interest in the welfare of civilians has often been limited to considerations related to the long-term control of contested areas. The response is led by the Army's Special Support Group for IDP Management and the Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority (PaRRSA). The former ensures that humanitarian work is aligned with counter-insurgency objectives – thereby reducing humanitarian space – while the latter ensures that the projects implemented by international agencies coincide with national plans and priorities (National, February 2010; SSG, 2010).

Since mid-2009, the government has increasingly focused on reconstruction and rehabilitation, with an emphasis on KP and particularly the Swat Valley. The Strategic Oversight Council, led by the prime minister with the support of the KP governor and the Special Support Group among others, will guide a long-term strategy based on a post-crisis needs assessment (PCNA) supported by a number of donor governments and the UN and finished in late 2009 (Dawn, November 2009).

Numerous international agencies are involved in reconstruction. The World Bank and the government have established a fund of roughly \$1 billion for post-conflict recovery in KP and FATA (ADB, 2009). The US and the UK have supported Pakistan's Ministry of Defense on reconstruction and recovery projects carried out by Pakistan-led civil-military teams there (USDoS, 2010).

The international humanitarian response in Pakistan is led by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and his UN country team, supported by a number of international agencies under the inter-agency cluster approach (PHRP, 2010).

Achievements notwithstanding, there have been significant obstacles in ensuring a consistent and predictable response which would address the needs of all IDPs. First, there has been a lack of access. Despite having raised the issue on a number of occasions, humanitarian organisations have been denied access to the displacement-affected population regularly since 2004, because of the security concerns expressed by the government (OneWorld, March 2004; IRIN, 2004; RWB, 2009; IRIN, November 2009; AlertNet, January 2010). Deliberate attacks on humanitarian agencies in 2009 and 2010, which led to the death of 12 members of the UN staff in 2009, have stopped humanitarian agencies reaching IDPs. Threats against IDP camp areas have also impeded service delivery (UN, October 2009; Newsline, 2004; Seattle Times, 2010; DT, June 2010).

The security forces' leadership of the response has been controversial. Humanitarians are divided over whether to engage and support government programmes or instead advocate for humanitarian principles. Some agencies emphasise that the army's resources, expertise and intelligence are necessary for reaching the IDPs (ICG, 2009). But others warn against tailoring the humanitarian response to criteria defined by military needs and objectives. As a result, aid agencies have drawn up guidelines to define their relationship with the armed forces, to protect their neutrality and enable them to reach civilians in need (Reuters, June 2010; DT, January 2010).

While 71 per cent of funds requested in 2009 were met by donations, only 39 per cent of the \$538 million requested in the revised Humanitarian Response Plan for 2010 was funded by the end of July (WP, February 2010; AlertNet, February 2010,

UN, July 2010). Due to this shortfall, food distribution and education programmes have been halted and IDP camps handed over to national authorities (Dawn, April 2010).

The added humanitarian needs emanating from recent flooding have posed new funding challenges to the UN. Less than 20% of the \$459 million needed to cover the relief effort had been disbursed by mid-August 2010 (Reliefweb, August 2010; PIFERP, August 2010).

Note: This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Pakistan. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Centre contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people.

In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

Contact:

Nina M. Birkeland

Head of Monitoring and Advocacy

Tel.: +41 (0)22 795 07 34

Email: nina.birkeland@nrc.ch

Jacob Rothing

Country Analyst

Tel.: +41 (0)77 448 72 44

Email: jacob.rothing@nrc.ch

IDMC

Norwegian Refugee Council

Chemin de Balexert 7-9

1219 Geneva, Switzerland

www.internal-displacement.org

Tel: +41 (0)22 799 0700

Fax: +41 (0)22 799 0701