

Floods in Pakistan

Pakistan has just experienced its worst floods in decades. The suffering does not seem to be stopping any time soon. Millions have lost their homes, whilst hundreds have lost their lives. So, let us consider the floods from the angles of causation, devastation and aftermath. Regarding the handling of a major crisis, let us also consider the actions of the current rulers, the rulers in the time of the Khilafah (Caliphate) and the stance of the coming Khilafah inshaa Allah.

Causation of the Flooding

Researchers say that reason the may be phenomenal heatwaves. In April and May, temperatures exceeded 40°C. Another reason for the flooding has been considered to be climate change. Even though Pakistan produces less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, it ranks in the top 10 countries, that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Many factors contribute to flooding, but a warming atmosphere caused by climate change makes extreme rainfall more likely. Pakistan also has the largest number of glaciers outside of polar regions. Higher temperatures have led to more water flow from melting ice. There are other factors at play here that have contributed to the scale of devastation. These include deforestation through government neglect, as well as government failures to make adaptive changes, such as maintaining subterranean drainage channels and relocation measures, since the last major floods in 2010.

Devastating Effects of the Floods

The UN Secretary General has said that Pakistan is facing a “*monsoon on steroids*.” It has been confirmed by Sherry Rehman, Minister for Climate Change, that a third of Pakistan has been affected by the floods. Sindh and southern Punjab has been affected the most, with Balochistan also affected, to a lesser, but significant, extent. In Sindh 1,288 millimeters of rain has been reported, whilst the monthly average rain is 46 millimeters. It is the most rain Pakistan has witnessed in three decades. There is almost a 592% increase in rainfall.

There have been over 1100 deaths, one third of whom were children, with 1600 people being injured. 325,000 houses have been completely destroyed and 733,000 houses have been damaged. The UN estimated around 33 million of Pakistanis have been displaced and affected by this flood.

The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, urged the world to come to Pakistan’s aid, as he launched a \$160m appeal to help the tens of millions affected in the disaster. “Millions are homeless, schools and health facilities have been destroyed, livelihoods are shattered, critical infrastructure wiped out, and people’s hopes and dreams have washed away,” UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said.

Aftermath of the Floods

The aftermath of these floods is also severe. It has left the Pakistan in a difficult situation. Pakistan has taken a \$10 billion hit, with its economy already in crisis. With the crops and livestock affected adversely, imports will only increase and exports will decrease further, pulling Pakistan further into an economic crisis. Pakistan’s inflation has already hit a 47-year high, before the full impact of the floods.

It has been reported that 3.6 million acres of crops have been affected. Almost 800,000 livestock have been lost. Around 40% of the labor force rely on agriculture for employment, whilst the agricultural sector constitutes a fifth of the whole economy. "The agricultural sector is in turmoil. The cotton crop and vegetables are completely wiped out in many key areas," said Pakistan Businesses Forum Vice President Ahmad Jawad.

As much as half of Pakistan's cotton crop has been damaged by the torrential rains, Planning Minister, Ahsan Iqbal, has said, citing preliminary estimates. The country is the fifth-largest cotton producer, accounting for 5% of global output. The damage could further shrink the world's cotton supply. Food costs have jumped with tomato prices surging fivefold and onions tripling.

Sowing next year's wheat crop, which starts in October 2022, will be another challenge. Pakistan is already in talks with Russia over importing wheat, Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, said last month in parliament. Even before the floods, the country was facing a wheat shortage of about 2.6 million tons. The direct crop loss to flood damage is \$2.3 billion, according to an estimate by economist Ammar Khan.

Measures Taken by the Government

Steps are being taken to import vegetables and other items from Iran and Afghanistan. The government then tested public opinion for trade with India, but retreated under public pressure against normalization with this enemy state. However, floodwaters are restricting access across the country, with more than 100 bridges and about 3000 kilometers of roads damaged or destroyed. "The floods have broken multiple bridges so supplies from Iran will not reach Pakistan's main population center in Punjab province," Vice President of Pakistan Businesses forum Jawad said.

Other than trade, the government is active in appealing for foreign funding from colonialist countries and institutions. The UN Secretary General then released a video message urging the world to help Pakistan in this time of crisis. Then, developing countries asked European countries and the US to cough up aid for Pakistan, due to their gas emissions.

However, as has been seen countless times before, including the earthquake of 2005 and the floods of 2010, despite these announcements and funds, on the ground it is the good Muslims of Pakistan, that are leading the efforts and providing the relief, whilst the government is largely absent.

The Khilafah Rashidah Mobilized the Ummah in Disasters

Overwhelmed by a major crisis, Pakistan is left foundering due to the absence of the Khilafah. The Islamic Ummah has immense resources, collectively, from Indonesia to Morocco. However, without the Khilafah, the lands are divided, weakening each and every one of them. Moreover, without, the Khilafah, the rulers are detached from the people, appealing abroad, whilst making token visits to the affected regions.

Let us consider the famine in Madinah, that arose after a drought, at the time when Umar al-Farooq (ra) was Khaleefah. He (ra) did not ask for help from the kuffar of that time, but from the Ummah around the world. The Islamic state was so vast that help from unaffected regions arrived in a substantial manner, when the capital was overwhelmed. It is narrated by Ibn Kathir in his book Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah **فَكَتَبَ عُمَرُ إِلَى أَبِي مُوسَى بِالْبَصْرَةِ أَنْ يَا غوثَاهُ لِأُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ وَقَتَبَ إِلَى عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ بِمِصْرَ أَنْ يَا غوثَاهُ لِأُمَّةٍ مُحَمَّدٍ فَبِعَثَ إِلَيْهِ كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمَا بِقَافِلَةٍ عَظِيمَةٍ تَحْمِلُ الْبُرِّ وَسَائِرِ الْأَطْعِمَاتِ** "Umar (ra) wrote to Abu Musa (ra) in

Basra, “Assist the Ummah of Muhammad (saw).” And he wrote to Amr bin Al-Aas in Misr that “Assist the Ummah of Muhammad (saw).” So each of them sent to him a huge caravan laden with grain and all manner of foodstuffs.”

Far from being detached, the Khaleefah lived amongst the people, sharing in their suffering until relief came. It is narrated in Kanz ul Amaal (كنز العمال) that, "تَقَرَّرَ بَطْنُ عُمَرَ وَكَانَ يَأْكُلُ الزَّيْتِ عَامَ الرَّمَادَةِ وَكَانَ قَدْ حَرَّمَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ السَّمْنَ قَالَ فَفَقَرَ بَطْنُهُ بِأَصْبُعِهِ وَقَالَ قَرَقِرَ مَا شِئْتِ أَنْ تُفَرَّقِرَ إِنَّهُ "The stomach of Umar (ra) was rumbling, since he was eating only oil in the year of famine, having forbidden himself fat. He flicked his stomach with his finger, whilst proclaiming, “Rumble all you like. There is nothing for you other than this until the people are revived.”

How the Coming Khilafah will Deal with Disasters

The coming Khilafah will certainly take effective measures for the relief of the Ummah.

1. Mobilization of the resources of the Islamic Ummah. Unifying the Muslim World as a vast Khilafah, from Indonesia to Morocco, the Khaleefah will ensure that resources arrive rapidly from other Wilayahs of the Islamic state, just as the Khaleefah Umar (ra) received assistance from the governed regions (wilayahs) on an emergency basis.

2. Ending Spending on the Prohibited, Whilst Spending on Obligations. Even during the current crisis, which will last for months, Pakistan’s rulers are paying interest (riba) on debt, which amounts to around half of all taxation revenues. The abundant revenues from state ownership of heavy industry and state supervision of energy and minerals, will be spent on the obligations.

3. Emergency Loans and Taxation. These are considered if there are insufficient funds from the stipulated Shariah revenues, such as Zakah on trading merchandise, kharaaj on agricultural lands and revenues from the sale of energy and minerals. The Prophet (saw) said, « لا ضَرَرَ ولا ضَرَارَ » “No harming and no reciprocation of harm.” In the case where harm cannot be prevented, without taking loans from Muslims for dealing with emergencies, such as floods and earthquakes, the Khilafah will do so. The Khaleefah also has the provision of taxing the wealthy, beyond their needs and some of their luxuries, as it preventing harm is an obligation upon the Ummah as a whole, whilst the Khaleefah is the guardian over the affairs of the Ummah.

Indeed, we cannot delay the re-establishment of the Khilafah until the end of the crisis. Instead, we must re-establish it now to resolve the crisis.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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