European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Pakistan

Introduction

For many years, military and insurgent operations in Pakistan have caused human suffering and large-scale internal displacements. This situation is compounded by the presence of almost 2.7 million Afghan refugees. Furthermore, Pakistan experiences recurring natural disasters, and suffers some of the world’s worst food insecurity and chronic malnutrition.

What are the needs?

The Afghan refugee crisis is among the largest and most protracted refugee crises in the world. Since 2015, there have been periods of intense pressure on refugees to return, often through harassment and intimidation, requiring a concomitant increase in protection services. Access to healthcare and education for refugees is also limited for several reasons.

The governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan reached agreements at the end of 2018 on measures to return large numbers of Afghans residing in Pakistan in 2019. The northwest of Pakistan and the areas bordering Afghanistan have also been affected by large-scale internal displacements due to insurgency. A military campaign launched in 2014 prompted the displacement of over a million people, adding to those still displaced from previous years. While more than 1.5 million internally displaced people have returned to their places of origin following an acceleration of returns over the past few years, over 96,000 people remained displaced as of December 2018.

Pakistan is one of the world’s most disaster-prone countries and frequently experiences multiple disasters in a given year; the province of Sindh has been repeatedly affected by both floods and drought. High levels of malnutrition, coupled with limited access to water, sanitation and medical services, have compromised the healthcare capacities of the most vulnerable communities.
How are we helping?

In 2018, the European Union allocated €5.5 million to provide assistance to internally displaced Pakistanis and Afghan refugees, as well as to strengthen the resilience and the capacity of vulnerable communities to respond to future natural disasters.

Current humanitarian actions in Pakistan focus on three separate but interrelated crises: support for people affected by the conflict in the northwest; for Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and for those affected by food insecurity related to climate change and recurrent natural disasters.

The European Commission assists the most vulnerable displaced Pakistanis both in their areas of refuge and in the destroyed areas to which they are returning, notably with support for water and sanitation facilities. Although most Afghan refugees are integrated into Pakistani society, some live precariously in isolated communities where EU-funded projects assist them with healthcare services, water and sanitation facilities, and legal protection services. The EU also contributes to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) that provides protection for refugees, as well as an organised return programme.

In the arid and drought-prone province of Sindh, the EU funds a programme that focuses on promoting the integration of emergency nutritional shock response protocols into the government-led programme to tackle long-term malnutrition and food insecurity.

The EU has operated in Pakistan since the 1990s, providing humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict and major natural disasters, including the 2005 earthquake and the devastating floods between 2010 and 2015, which affected a total of over 30 million people. Relief items were channelled to flood victims through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Since 2009, EU humanitarian aid to people in need in Pakistan has totalled €554.5 million.