



NDYS in Action, Newsletter

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The VOICE of YOUTH is NEEDED!

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Salta, Argentina



Topics

Climate Change and disaster reduction
Floods caused severe troubles in Pakistan.

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Driving, impossible...riding is a challenge.

With the onset of a heavier than usual monsoon season, assistance to tens of thousands of people affected by torrential rains and flash floods in different areas of the country has not been adequate and the risk of disease outbreaks is growing, local authorities have said.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a 23 July humanitarian update that the worst affected areas have been the northeastern province of Punjab and southwestern province of Balochistan.

According to Hassan Baloch, Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Balochistan, flash floods caused by heavy rain since 20 July have killed at least 50 people and affected 50,000 in the worst-hit district of Barkhan, about 350km east of provincial capital Quetta.

He said neighbouring Kohlu and Sibi districts were also badly affected. "The rain is continuing and water is surrounding houses. People are now really scared," local resident called Amjad Baloch said. "It has been raining more or less continually for two days here. Very little is being done to help people, many of whom have lost homes."

Major-General Saleem Nawaz, chief of Balochistan's Frontier Corps, a federal paramilitary force, told the media that relief and rescue operations had been launched to "move affected people to safe locations".

More than 40 villages have been inundated by floodwater in Kohlu, leaving hundreds of people stranded. Around 28,000 people were reportedly marooned in Sibi district. In other areas of Balochistan, homeless people have been sleeping in the open, with some abandoning homes to head for higher land. Riverine floods triggered by the rains have been responsible for the flooding in many areas.

An emergency has been declared in Kohlu district and areas around the Turkha Dam have been evacuated. The collapse of a bridge means the road link between Kohlu and the rest of the country has been severed.

Nasrullah Rind, Deputy Commissioner of Kohlu, told the media that relief goods provided by PDMA were not adequate. "Three hundred families have been affected and they are all living in relief camps, but till now just 100 tents and 200 bags of wheat have been received," he said.

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Rind said he feared water-borne diseases would break out in affected areas.

While Balochistan province has been particularly hard hit, there have been dozens of deaths in rain-related incidents across the northwestern province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and in Punjab province. Most people have died as a result of house collapses or electrocution.

Rains have also caused waterways to swell in northern areas and in Pakistan-administered Kashmir while flooding has been reported in some southern Punjab districts.

Pakistan's Meteorological Office has predicted that widespread rains and thunderstorms would continue in northern parts of the country. The monsoon season usually lasts until September. Source: www.irinnews.org

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Drill about tsunami in coastal areas.

Drill about tsunami in coastal areas



This should be the beginning of a teaching period.

Sri Lanka completed its first ever mass tsunami evacuation drill this week. Over 14,000 people were evacuated in 14 coastal districts. "We selected one village in each district to carry out the drill and the evacuations were orderly," said Pradeep Kodippili, assistant director for early warning at the country's Disaster Management Centre (DMC).

Employing local authorities and the police, residents were alerted to the drill held on 13 July by warning towers, text messages and loud speakers. Signs erected after the 2004 Asian tsunami, including pictures, also warned residents of low-lying areas most at risk.

A month ago a 7.7 magnitude earthquake off the Nicobar Islands near Indonesia prompted the Sri Lankan authorities to issue a tsunami warning along the eastern coast.

More than 35,000 Sri Lankans lost their lives in the 2004 tsunami, which prompted moves to enhance warning systems and disaster preparedness programmes, Kodippili said.

"People are more aware that lives can be saved during a natural disaster if we pay more attention... Since the 2004 tragedy, there is a much better structure in place to deal with a sudden disaster," he said.

The DMC was set up five months after the disaster following the enactment of the Disaster Management Act. The Act also established the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) with the president as chairman. The DMC has regional offices in each of the country's 25 districts, with village-level committees as well.

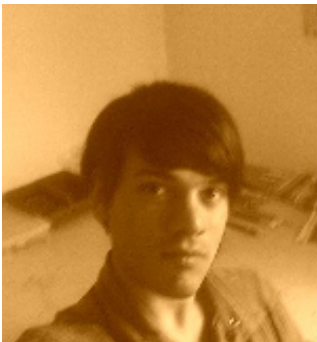
Local residents - many of whom ran from their homes in the early hours during last month's warning - welcomed the drill. "Our entire village just ran in our night clothes," Udyam Sujantha, a 29-year-old mother-of-two from the coastal village of Dutch Bar in the eastern district of Batticaloa said.

Sujantha almost did not survive the 2004 tsunami when she was swept away; she clung to a coconut tree before being found by relatives. Three grim memorials on the beach testify to the over 600 people in her village who were not so lucky.

More than five years on, many in coastal villages like Dutch Bar bemoan the lack of an early warning system at that time which could have saved thousands of lives.

"We didn't know anything then... Tsunami was just another word. Now we know we have to get that word out," another Dutch Bar resident, 45-year-old Andrado Violet who lost her mother, said.

"In 2004 the first I heard of any tsunami was when I saw a 30-foot wave crashing over the roof," local fisherman Clarence Regimus, said. Source: www.irinnews.org



Comments: It is nice to hear that the drill in Sri Lanka goes well on. This should be a very good example to other places at risk. Here we can see that better preparation is possible, we just have to work on it.

It is a shame what is happening in Pakistan, what about some help from the government? I mean a truly help. Is it that people should carry about themselves just like that?



"Communication saves lives!"

■ **For more information please contact** ■

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