



ODUMUNC 2011
Issue Brief for the
GA Fourth Committee: Special Political (SPECPOL)

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Pakistan

Direct fatalities in Pakistan the unprecedented monsoon floods in July-August number about 1,800. More than 1.8 million houses were destroyed, leaving over 4 million people homeless and over 20 million directly affected, out of a total population of about 168 million. Many have lost everything, making them vulnerable to malnutrition, disease and political intimidation. Their immediate survival depends on Pakistani and foreign assistance. Their long-term loyalty to the Pakistani state also may be in question, with major consequences for the future of Pakistan and conflicts in neighboring Afghanistan and India-controlled Kashmir.

The crisis comes after three somewhat comparable disasters, one already in Pakistan itself. The scale of international response hints at the level of need in this case. An earthquake on 12 January 2010 destroyed much of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, killing about 230,000 and leaving about one million people homeless. Over \$3 billion worth of aid was pledged by foreign governments and charities. The Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004 killed over 230,000 people in fourteen countries, and left 1.5 million homeless. In response, international donors provided more than \$7 billion in humanitarian aid. Finally, a major earthquake hit Pakistan on 8 October 2005, killing about 80,000 and leaving 3 million homeless, roughly one-sixth the number affected by the August 2010 flooding. Total foreign emergency and reconstruction aid in response to the Pakistani earthquake totaled over \$5 billion.

United Nations officials established an initial appeal for \$460 million of emergency relief assistance. The UN lacks resources of its own. It can only ask for contributions from member countries, which may be channeled through UN agencies, especially the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), or donated directly. Current commitments are targeted only for immediate survival of the displaced. OCHA has raised this to \$2 billion, its largest appeal ever. Pakistani officials estimate the cost of rebuilding affected villages, cities and infrastructure at about \$50 billion. Much will have to come from international loans.

The current Pakistan crisis is unprecedented in geographic scale and the needs it creates. It also comes at a time of widespread concern for the future of Pakistan. The country faces enormous regional and ethnic separatist pressures, which some fear could provoke ethnic warfare and national disintegration. The crisis also comes at a moment of heightened concern over Taliban activism, as Islamic radicals gain greater control over the countryside and cities. The crisis has made it difficult for the Pakistan Army to aggressively combat the Taliban in remote Waziristan. With an arsenal of perhaps 80 to 100 nuclear warheads, instability in Pakistan could mean extraordinary dangers for the entire globe.

The crisis has different implications for different countries. China is close, connected by road to the north of Pakistan and has excellent relations with the government in Islamabad. It is well positioned to offer large scale assistance. Indian and the United States tend to view China as a rival for influence in Pakistan. Middle Eastern countries led by Saudi Arabia also have been at



ODUMUNC 2011
Issue Brief for the
GA Fourth Committee: Special Political (SPECPOL)

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Pakistan

the forefront of emergency assistance. The United States generally is parsimonious with foreign aid, suspicious of the Pakistani government, and tends to make humanitarian assistance dependent on political reform, but strategic concerns might overcome its accustomed reserve. European countries have dominated global foreign assistance, and are more willing to overlook short-term corruption and the need for pay offs if the result is faster aid delivery, but constrained by their own needs to balance government spending.

The most divisive issues for the international community concern not immediate aid to the desperately needy, but strategies for long-term recovery. Most foreign donors want to strengthen the Pakistani government and encourage political reform, if only to preempt rising regional separatism and religious radicalism, but rapid aid delivery often requires concessions to local leaders and traditional ways. Linking aid to democratization and counterterrorism will be important to many donors.

For the international community, the crisis also raises tensions with the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the basic framework to coordinate long-term aid planning. Since most countries appropriate emergency relief and development aid money from the same budget, support for short-term crisis tends to undermine long-term goals. UN development leaders have long sought to establish an independent international fund, independent from emergency relief. To assuage governments fearful of losing control over their contributions, this could be controlled by the UN Economic Social Council (Ecosoc) or a specially created body.



ODUMUNC 2011
Issue Brief for the
GA Fourth Committee: Special Political (SPECPOL)

Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Pakistan

Get started: global responses to the crisis

[“Pakistan's floods, a ruined country”, and “Pakistan, after the deluge”](#), *The Economist*, 16 September 2010.

[Pakistan's floods: broader implications](#), International Institute for Strategic Studies (London) September 2010. An outstanding report, with maps and graphics.

Neil MacFarquhar, [“U.N. seeks \\$460 million in flood aid for Pakistan.”](#) *New York Times*, 12 August 2010, p. A6.

Waqar Gillani, [“U.S. Envoy Vows to Help Pakistan Rebuild After Flooding.”](#) *New York Times*, 16 September 2010.

Country background: [Pakistan in the New York Times](#), and [Pakistan profile on the BBC](#).

Get started: your country

[Country background at BBC News Country Profiles](#) (facts, leaders, perspectives for all countries)

[Country background at CIA World Factbook](#) (history, people and governments for all countries)