

Impacts of Climate Change: Unusual Heavy Rains in Pakistan

written by Ezba Walayat | April 22, 2024



Introduction

Pakistan has been dealing with the effects of unusual heavy rains and thunderstorms which began on 12th April, 2024. The rate of rainfall in April has been almost twice as high as it has ever recorded. Pakistan normally experiences the monsoon season from June to September, therefore the region's severe downpours at this time of year are unusual. The relentless downpour resulted in flash floods, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. According to official from National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), at least 71 people have died and 61 injured in four days in storm-related accidents in Pakistan, including at least 30 people that were killed by lightning. The Northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has seen the highest death toll, with 32 fatalities including 15 children and more than 1,300 houses damaged. The KP provincial government issued a flood emergency declaration in 14 districts in order to provide aid and reestablish water supplies and communication networks. Whereas, in Baluchistan, eight people were killed, eight injured and 22 houses and other structures were damaged. Due to the continuing rainfall, the provincial government declared an urban flood emergency in the Quetta district.

Climate Change: A Growing Challenge for Pakistan

Pakistan is among the countries that are most susceptible to the impacts of climate change, with increasing temperatures, variable rainfall patterns, and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather

events. Despite contributing less than 1% of global emissions that cause global warming, Pakistan is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Pakistan has suffered significantly as the climate catastrophe exacerbates extreme weather and climate conditions, including record heat waves and disastrous floods. In 2022, Pakistan experienced one of the worst floods, affecting 33 million people, taking at least 1,700 lives, and submerging more than one-third of the nation. When U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited areas devastated by floods, he said that Pakistanis were “facing a monsoon on steroids the relentless impact of epochal levels of rain and flooding.” With greenhouse gas emissions from the world increasing, Guterres highlighted the lack of efforts regarding climate action. He said, “Let’s quit slumbering as we allow climate change to destroy our planet. It is Pakistan today. It might be your country tomorrow.”



Call for Action

Pakistan is experiencing severe effects from climate change, including altered weather patterns and devastating floods. Unfortunately, these impacts are projected to escalate. The climate issue in Pakistan serves as a clear message for all countries. Developing nations, despite contributing significantly less to greenhouse gas emissions, bear the brunt of its repercussions. Therefore, developed nations should make efforts to reduce emissions and assist underdeveloped countries. Moreover, to enhance resilience and mitigate future disasters, Pakistan urgently requires international assistance and climate financing. This funding would enable the government to establish adaptation measures, enhance infrastructure, and invest in systems capable of protecting its people and dealing with the ever-increasing challenges posed by climate change.