

After the Floods

Millions recover from the raging waters in Pakistan.

Anar Gul used to live in a four-bedroom house. Now he and his nine family members share a single tent. Mattresses, blankets, clothes, and a broken tape player are all that they have left. "This is everything," Gul says.



AP Images

A Pakistani girl waits for aid workers to arrive with food and water.

He was one of more than 17 million people affected by **massive**, or giant, floods in Pakistan in 2010. The floods were the worst in the southern Asian nation's history. The powerful currents flowed across about one-fifth of the country and killed more than 1,600 people.

International aid workers and the U.S. military are trying to help. They are delivering food, clean water, and other supplies. Gul hopes that even more help is on the way. "There are so many houses to be rebuilt," he says. "It's not only [in my village]; it's everywhere."



AP Images

Families carry their belongings through water in southern Pakistan.

Washed Away

Pakistan has heavy rains every summer. But 2010's rain gushed out of control. It caused the Indus River and other waterways to flood. Much of the water began in the northern areas of Pakistan. As the floods moved south, they left about 62,000 square miles underwater. That is bigger than the state of Georgia.

Millions of people fled to higher ground. They watched helplessly as the floods swept away entire towns. More than 1.2 million homes were ruined. The floods also destroyed about 7,000 schools and more than 400 health-care facilities.

In addition, the water ruined countless bridges and more than 5,000 miles of roads and railroad tracks. Losing those passageways has made it harder for aid workers to reach some of the people who need help. Many areas are now **accessible**, or able to be reached, only by air.

"In northern areas that are cut off ... people are in need of food ... to **survive** [or live]. There is currently no other way to reach these flood victims than by helicopter," says Marcus Prior. He works for an aid group called the World Food Programme.

The United States has supplied more than 30 aircraft for the aid efforts. U.S. Marine Captain Matt Wesenberg is one of the pilots who have dropped off supplies.

"We are out there helping them, bringing food and **evacuating** people," he says. To evacuate is to move from a dangerous place to a safer area.



AFP/Getty Images

A Pakistani soldier rescues a boy whose village was flooded.

Long Road to Recovery

Aid workers are taking care of people's basic needs now. But world leaders say a full recovery will take years—in part because Pakistan was home to millions of poor people before the floods. The nation will need to rebuild much of its **infrastructure**. That is public services, including roads, power and water supplies, schools, and public transportation.

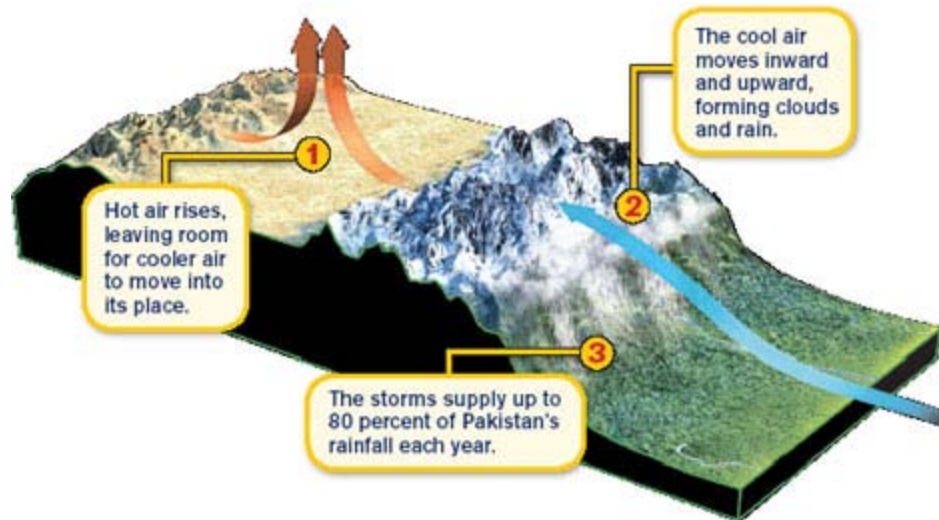
Many of the country's people will need help for some time. A large number of residents farm for a living. But the floods washed away crops and soil.

The U.S. government last year promised \$7.5 billion to improve Pakistan's water and electricity systems over a five-year period. Now, at least some of that money will be used for recovery efforts.

World leaders are trying to remain positive about the future. "This is a huge-scale disaster," says Rajiv Shah. He is in charge of the U.S. Agency for International Development. "But we have to continue to be optimistic."

Wild Wind

Heavy rain is always in the forecast for Pakistan in summer. Southern Asia experiences a **monsoon** season around that time each year. A monsoon is a change in wind direction. It often brings strong rainfall.



DK Images

Spotlight on Pakistan

Size: 307,374 square miles (almost twice as big as California)

Population: about 187 million people (more than half of the U.S. population)

Land: desert, with mountains in the north; about one-fourth of the land is farmable

Religion: Islam; roughly 95 percent of the population practices this religion

Literacy: About half of people age 15 and older can read and write; only 36 percent of the women can



Getty Images