

Rebalancing power in aid: A Pakistan Case Study in humanitarian disasters and migration

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Challenging the discourse of North/South power relations

- ▶ “Decolonization” and localization” in development practice framed as a way to “shift the power” between the former colonizers and former colonized states.
- ▶ But this discourse is not the appropriate way to frame or approach the discussion on how a very unequal power dynamic between North and South can be equalized.
- ▶ There are many more nuances in this discussion which these terms actually encourage us to avoid and which we must confront if we are to create equity between nations.
- ▶ I challenge these terms and their usage in the development and humanitarian discourse and take a more radical view;
 - ▶ firstly, by focusing on the South, by the South, for the South;
 - ▶ secondly, by considering that it is not a “reimagining” of aid that is necessary, but rather the end of aid.
- ▶ Several barriers to this approach, including resistance the powerful North. But more importantly, the resistance by the South itself.

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

Pakistan: A Humanitarian Profile

Major humanitarian incidences

- ▶ Kashmir earthquake 2005 - killed over 100,000; displaced over 3 million.
- ▶ National Floods 2010/11 - over 2000 killed, one-fifth of country flooded; displaced almost 20 million.
- ▶ FATA IDPs 2004-2016 - 5.3 million displaced.

Major humanitarian players

- ▶ Pakistan government
 - ▶ National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
 - ▶ Provincial Disaster management Authority (PDMA)
- ▶ International
 - ▶ UN Agencies; IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA etc.
 - ▶ Bilaterals: FCDO, USAID, GAC EU, etc.
 - ▶ INGOs; Islamic Relief, Concern Worldwide, Oxfam etc.
- ▶ National (Charitable and philanthropic)
 - ▶ Edhi Foundation
 - ▶ Al-Khidmat
 - ▶ Saylani Trust

Pakistan Floods 2022

- ▶ Over 33 million displaced
- ▶ All four provinces affected
- ▶ 1/3 of country underwater
- ▶ Over 2000 killed
- ▶ Almost 4 million acres of farmland destroyed (45% of agricultural cropland)
- ▶ Over 1 million Livestock killed
- ▶ Almost 2 million houses destroyed
- ▶ Over 12,000 kms of roads destroyed
- ▶ Almost 300 bridges washed away

PAKISTAN

IMAGERY ANALYSIS: 01/07/2022 TO 31/08/2022 PUBLISHED 01/09/2022 V1.



FLOOD EXTENT
[01 JUL. - 31 AUG. 2022]

~85,000km²



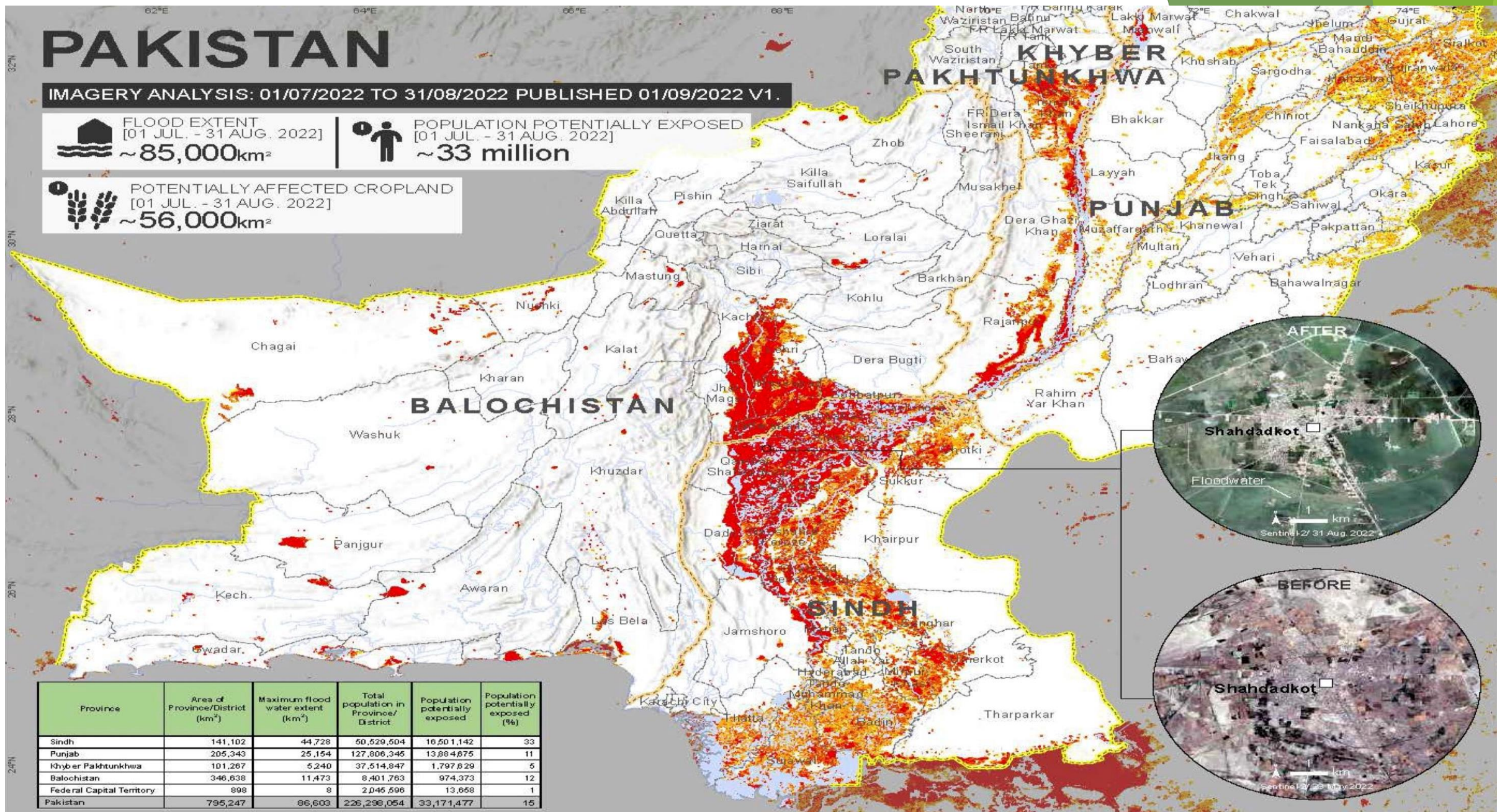
POPULATION POTENTIALLY EXPOSED
[01 JUL. - 31 AUG. 2022]

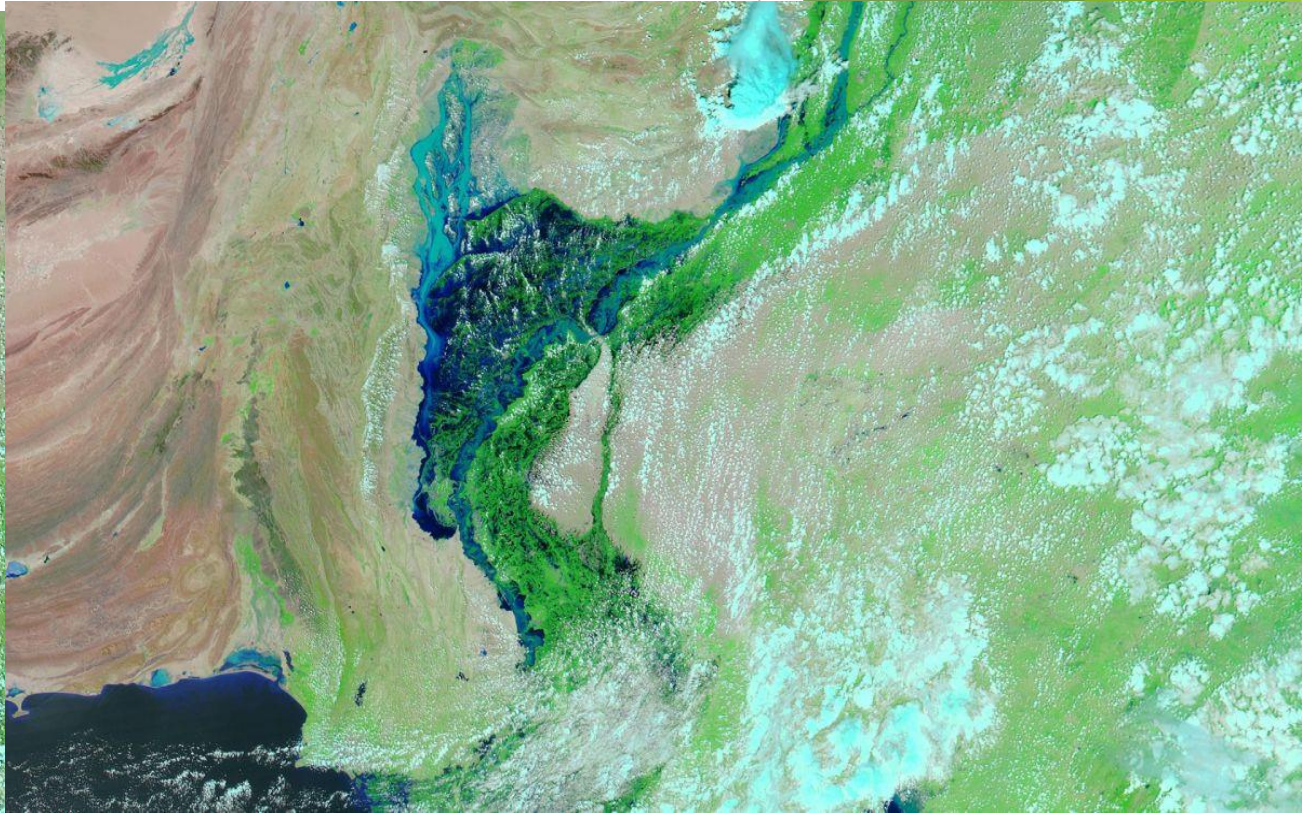
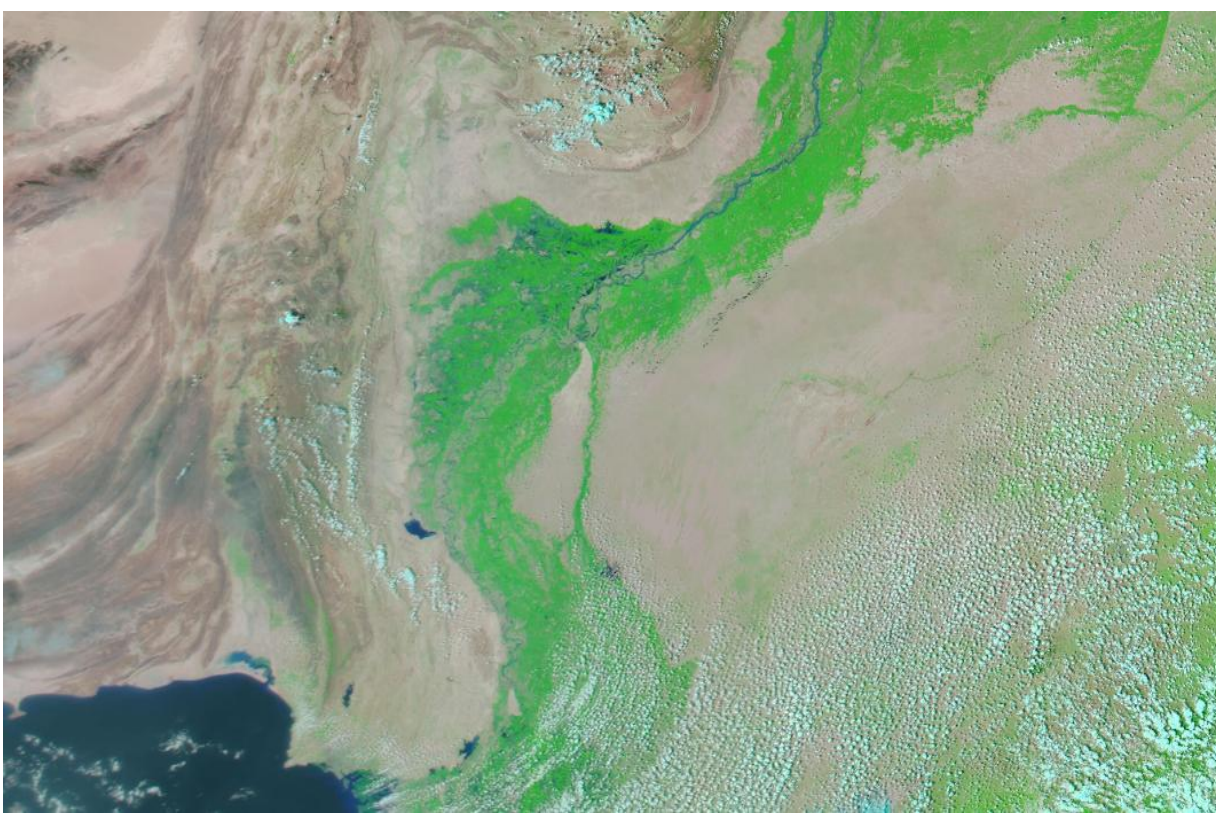
~33 million



POTENTIALLY AFFECTED CROPLAND
[01 JUL. - 31 AUG. 2022]

~56,000km²





Humanitarian gaps and issues

► Pakistan government

- Response not forthcoming/unified as in past humanitarian disasters.
- Complete dependence on foreign aid assistance/pledges to come through before undertaking any major relief effort.
- No adequate district level services available on ground.
- Lackluster media response to crisis.
- Focus on political upheaval in country rather than human suffering.
- News of initial disaster in Balochistan province shielded from public because those were flash floods.
- Some provinces received greater assistance than others.
- Lots of talk about climate reparations, but no rescue or rehabilitation plan in effect in immediate term. plan

Gaps contd.

▶ **International community**

- ▶ Do not seem as invested in this situation despite its catastrophic scale, unlike previous disasters.
- ▶ Initial burst of humanitarian aid in kind by UN, INGOs etc. but then dying down.
- ▶ No coordination mechanism created unlike in previous disasters.
- ▶ Lots of diplomatic media attention initially, but no sustained on-ground efforts.
- ▶ USAID the most prominent in terms of numbers.
- ▶ No joint action plan.

Gaps contd.

▶ Domestic Humanitarian response

- ▶ The most responsive to situation.
- ▶ Individuals, charitable organizations, national NGOs etc. raced to the scene.
- ▶ Most aid led by donations and coordinated voluntarily.
- ▶ Unable to meet the scale of the disaster/compassion fatigue.
- ▶ Still working on ground in many areas but are unable to keep up with the scale of disaster.

Current situation

- ▶ Majority of the flooded areas still underwater - Sindh province worst affected.
- ▶ Water is not draining.
- ▶ No official shelters/camps in place.
- ▶ Some have begun to move back to their villages and rebuilding their homes themselves - no govt assistance.
- ▶ Outbreak of diseases - dengue, malaria, skin diseases - mostly among children.
- ▶ Onset of winter - no shelter.
- ▶ No longer top of mind among public at large.
- ▶ No government plan on how to rebuild infrastructure.

Pakistan: A migration profile

Migration profile

- ▶ A migrant sending country
 - ▶ Migrant labour - majority of almost 9 million Pakistani's overseas
 - ▶ Permanent economic migration/family reunification
 - ▶ Refugee focus via Afghan crisis/not a signatory to UNHCR conventions on refugees.
- ▶ Emigration Ordinance 1979 controls labour emigration overseas.
- ▶ No formal migration policy yet - many drafts developed.
- ▶ No formal refugee policy.

Afghan refugees in Pakistan

- ▶ About 4.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan since the 1980s. Three successive waves of refugees since then.
- ▶ Have never received Pakistani citizenship despite many being born here.
- ▶ Pakistan government focus on return of Afghans rather than integration.
- ▶ Informal integration of Afghan refugees in major cities.
- ▶ Over a million refugees have been voluntarily and involuntarily repatriated to Afghanistan since 2001.
- ▶ Of the remaining left in Pakistan, about 1.4 million are currently registered 1.5 million are not.
- ▶ Strong anti-Afghan/anti-refugee sentiments exist among public

Post Taliban takeover 2021

- ▶ Pakistan refuses entry to Afghans fleeing the conflict - closes the Torkham and Chaman borders
- ▶ Allows entry to only those holding valid Pakistan visas and/or an Proof of Registration Cards (PoC) issued by Pakistan.
- ▶ Allowing foreign governments to use Pakistan as a transit destination for refugees gaining asylum in a third country.
- ▶ Provides no support to those still awaiting repatriation to other countries in Pakistan.
- ▶ Anti- Pakistan sentiment among many who escaped the Taliban takeover.

Issues for you to consider

- ▶ Pakistan is in a conundrum between depending on aid and not wanting to make an effort to extricate itself from this dependency.
- ▶ Consistently in debt to IMF and other countries.
- ▶ It does not uphold many human rights measures for migrants/refugees, in and out of Pakistan.
- ▶ It is currently facing some of the worst political and environmental disasters in its history.
- ▶ Regionally the power balance is shifting towards China-Russia nexus.
- ▶ How does “decolonization” or “localization” fit in this scenario?
- ▶ How does ”aid” fit into this scenario as opposed to foreign relations with the Global North?