



SWEPT AWAY BY FLOODS AND PROMISES

Report of the Fact-Finding Mission
to Sindh, Pakistan

January 2025



South Asians for Human Rights

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List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
COP27	27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DDMA	District Disaster Management Authority
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
L&DF	Loss and Damage Fund
LkSG	Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz (German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act)
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
SAHR	South Asians for Human Rights
SAPPK	South Asia Partnership Pakistan
SPHF	Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees
SRSO	Sindh Rural Support Organisation
UC	Union Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank

Key Terms

Climate Debt: Concept that historically high-emitting nations owe compensation to those facing climate impacts

Environmental Colonialism: Pattern where colonial-era exploitation continues through climate impacts and responses

Global North: Term referring to wealthy, industrialised nations, primarily in North America and Europe

Global South: Term referring to developing nations, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America

Slow Violence: Term coined by Rob Nixon describing how climate change creates delayed but devastating impacts on vulnerable populations



Women carry belongings salvaged from their flooded home after monsoon rains, in the Qambar Shahdadkot district of Sindh Province, of Pakistan, 6 Sept. 2022 Arab News (<https://arab.news/b5k4z>)

Executive Summary

When the floodwaters from melting glaciers and heavy monsoon rains receded across Pakistan in 2022, they left behind not just extensive physical destruction but a profound human rights crisis and the climate injustice that continues to this day. People from the peasantry and working class who contributed almost nothing to global greenhouse gas emissions, were greatly afflicted, while also experiencing grievous violations of their fundamental rights. Among other problems, these violations seriously impacted their right to adequate housing, their livelihoods and their access to food, drinking water, healthcare and education, which together constitute a dignified standard of life. These transgressions also affected their participation and access in the recovery processes that was meant to restore their well-being.

Nearly three years after the disaster, SAHR conducted this fact-finding mission in Larkana, Shikarpur and Nawabshah districts in Sindh province. Sindh was the province where the most serious damages and losses occurred. The mission's objective was to investigate whether the flood-

The mission's objective was to investigate whether the flood-affected population's rights were respected, protected and fulfilled during the recovery process. However, the findings revealed that the flood response failed to meet the basic human rights standards established in Pakistan's Constitution and the international commitments of the State.

affected population's rights were respected, protected and fulfilled during the recovery process. However, the findings revealed that the flood response failed to meet the basic human rights standards established in Pakistan's Constitution and the international commitments of the State. This failure particularly affected persons who were already marginalised by existing social and economic structures.

The probe found inequalities in disaster management due to the existing feudal power structures influencing the flood response strategies. For instance, in Nawabshah district, embankments were allegedly breached to protect lands owned by influential landlords, exposing poor villages to flooding. Some distressed populations were completely erased from the official disaster response, with entire villages like Usman Brohi in UC Chanesar of the district receiving no government assessment or support, thus denying their basic right to protection and recovery.

In the Shikarpur district, the mission met a woman whose husband had two wives, both living in the same house, struggling to maintain dignity and privacy for nine people in a so-called 'flood-resistant' house - a mere 16×18 ft room, without a toilet or kitchen. This room—provided through the Sindh government's housing scheme and funded predominantly by the World Bank (WB) and other financial institutions—fundamentally violated the residents' rights to adequate housing and a living standard offering privacy and dignity.

Landless tenants, who make up the majority of the affected populace, found themselves excluded from housing assistance due to demands for the required documentation which are impossible to acquire within a system of verbal land agreements - a clear violation of the principles of non-discrimination in a humanitarian response. Many women—who are already facing obstacles in a patriarchal society—described traveling long distances at considerable expense, to navigate bureaucratic processes designed with little consideration for their constraints, which undermines their right to equal access to assistance.

Breaking this cycle of rights violations requires radical changes to the structures that create vulnerability: democratising land currently concentrated in monopsony arrangements, reconceptualising housing as a foundation for human capability rather than mere shelter, centering affected people in governance processes and reimagining finance as a mechanism for justice rather than dependency.

All this unfolds within a financial architecture where recovery is funded not through compensation—reflecting historical responsibility for climate change impacts—but through loans - thus burdening future generations with debt service obligations that will endure for decades and raising serious questions about intergenerational justice and the right to development.

Breaking this cycle of rights violations requires radical changes to the structures that create vulnerability: democratising land currently concentrated in monopsony arrangements, reconceptualising housing as a foundation for human capability rather than mere shelter, centering affected people in governance processes and reimagining finance as a mechanism for justice rather than dependency.

The 2022 floods represent a critical moment. The choices made now in relation to Sindh's ongoing recovery will determine whether future climate disasters continue to subvert people's rights or become opportunities to implement climate justice in both letter and spirit. This report identifies both the urgent necessity and potential pathways

for positive change - recommending systems where recovery enhances the capabilities of those facing the greatest climate impacts while fulfilling their fundamental rights to dignity, security and participation.

Recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission

The Government of Pakistan must:

- Incorporate human rights standards into disaster management frameworks
- Reform land rights systems to address the vulnerability of landless populations
- Establish a Climate Justice Fund financed through progressive taxation, at global and local level
- Reconceptualise assistance as 'climate reparations' - shifting from 'recovery financing' to compensation
- Mandate appropriate housing standards with essential facilities, to ensure dignified living
- Implement independent oversight with community representation
- Revise SPHF minimum standards to include essential facilities
- Ensure sufficient space for average household sizes
- Implement participatory design processes involving respect and care for cultural diversity
- Eliminate discriminatory criteria that exclude self-recovering households
- Develop a comprehensive housing policy incorporating the principles of sustainable climate resilience
- Create alternative documentation systems that are made accessible for landless populations
- Implement special measures for vulnerable groups
- Establish independent oversight to monitor discrimination
- Develop specific protocols for women and children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and minority communities
- Create sustainable funding mechanisms for disaster risk reduction
- Reform disaster legislation to incorporate human rights protections

The Provincial Government of Sindh must:

- Implement land reforms addressing established feudal patterns
- Redesign housing programmes to ensure human dignity and cultural appropriateness
- Develop Sindh-specific climate adaptation strategies
- Establish public monitoring with direct accountability to affected communities

- Create District Climate Resilience Units, integrating local knowledge
- Establish transparency mechanisms, making recovery information accessible
- Create public oversight committees with decision-making authorities
- Simplify administrative procedures to reduce barriers to participation
- Develop accessible grievance mechanisms with binding remedies

International Financial Institutions must:

- Shift from loans to grants for climate disaster recovery
- Create flexible frameworks accommodating local realities
- Establish accountability mechanisms accessible to affected communities
- Channel resources directly to community-level implementation
- Address power imbalances in programme design and implementation
- Create independent monitoring systems with community representation
- Establish clear lines of responsibility between implementing agencies
- Develop rights-based indicators for measuring recovery outcomes

The Global North must:

- Adequately fund Loss and Damage mechanisms through grants, not loans
- Establish legally enforceable emission reduction requirements
- Develop international standards for rights-based disaster response
- Support South-South collaboration and the exchange of knowledge
- Create frameworks for climate compensation claims and environment due diligence laws such as the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act and the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive

Chapter 1:

Understanding the Sindh Floods

1.1 Context of the Disaster

The Pakistan floods of 2022 were a climate disaster of unprecedented scale, affecting 33 million people, destroying 1.7 million homes and killing over 1,500 persons.¹ Economic impacts totaled USD 46.4 billion (USD 14.9 billion in damage, USD 15.2 billion in GDP losses, and USD 16.3 billion in rehabilitation needs).² That year, the Pakistan Meteorological Department recorded rainfall that was 243 percent above normal levels,³ while World Weather Attribution research confirmed that climate change intensified rainfall by 50-75 percent in the worst-affected provinces of Sindh and Balochistan.⁴ The Indus River system, flowing from the Himalayas to the Arabian Sea, became a channel of destruction due to the following converging climate and environmental factors:

- Intensified monsoon patterns: Unusually heavy rains formed atmospheric rivers funneling moisture into Pakistan during July-August 2022.^{5 6}
- Accelerated glacial melt: Climate change caused earlier and faster melting of Pakistan's northern glaciers while reducing winter ice formation.⁷
- Reduced vegetation cover: Decades of deforestation in the highlands removed the natural flood defenses that would normally absorb rainwater.⁸
- Obstructed drainage: Environmentally-negligent urbanisation blocked natural water pathways, worsening flooding across the country.⁹

¹ Zoha Tunio, "In Pakistan, 33 Million People Have Been Displaced by Climate-Intensified Floods," Inside Climate News, September 16, 2022, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/16092022/pakistan-flood-displacement/>.

² World Bank, "Pakistan: Flood Damages and Economic Losses Over USD 30 Billion and Reconstruction Needs Over USD 16 Billion - New Assessment," accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/28/pakistan-flood-damages-and-economic-losses-over-usd-30-billion-and-reconstruction-needs-over-usd-16-billion-new-assessme>.

³ Pakistan Meteorological Department, "Pakistan Monthly Climate Summary August 2022," accessed May 6, 2025, https://cdpc.pmd.gov.pk/Pakistan_Monthly_Climate_Summary_August_2022.pdf.

⁴ Friederike E. L. Otto et al., "Climate Change Likely Increased Extreme Monsoon Rainfall, Flooding Highly Vulnerable Communities in Pakistan," World Weather Attribution, September 15, 2022, <https://www.worldweatherattribution.org/wp-content/uploads/Pakistan-floods-scientific-report.pdf>.

⁵ "Pakistan Floods of 2022," Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed March 9, 2025, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Pakistan-floods-of-2022>.

⁶ "Pakistan Floods and Climate Change," British Red Cross, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://www.redcross.org.uk/stories/disasters-and-emergencies/world/climate-change-and-pakistan-flooding-affecting-millions>.

⁷ Q. Z. Chaudhry et al., "Glaciers and Glacial Lakes under Changing Climate in Pakistan," *Journal of Himalayan Earth Sciences* 8, no. 15 (2021): 4.

⁸ Nazir Ahmed Bazai et al., "Dynamics and Impacts of Monsoon-Induced Geological Hazards: A 2022 Flood Study along the Swat River in Pakistan," *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences* 25, no. 3 (March 11, 2025): 1071–93, <https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-25-1071-2025>.

⁹ *Ibid.*



A partially damaged traditional home with visible livestock shows that rural communities lost both shelter and agricultural assets during the flooding

The disaster unfolded in three phases: flash floods in the northern mountains, massive flooding of the Indus River and finally, prolonged standing water in Sindh's lowlands where poor drainage and flat terrain had created persistent inland lakes for months.¹⁰

1.2 The Vulnerability of Sindh

The vulnerability of the Sindh province stems from being Pakistan's lowest-lying region and the final catchment for the Indus basin. Its British colonial-era irrigation infrastructure lacks modern flood management systems and has significantly deteriorated over time.¹¹ The three districts at the center of this investigation—Larkana, Shikarpur and Nawabshah (Shaheed Benazirabad)—exemplify different dimensions of vulnerability: During the floods, Larkana District emerged as one of the worst-hit areas (See Figure 1).¹² The statistics demonstrate how climate-induced disasters, beyond their

¹⁰ "Pakistan Flood Created a 100km-Wide Lake, Satellite Images Show," CNN, accessed March 11, 2025, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/31/asia/pakistan-floods-forms-inland-lake-satellite-intl-hnk/index.html>.

¹¹ Daniel Haines, "Is Pakistan's Water Sector Still Trapped by Colonial Legacies?," Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research, October 12, 2023, <https://cscr.pk/explore/themes/energy-environment/is-pakistans-water-sector-still-trapped-by-colonial-legacies/>.

¹² Provincial Disaster Management Authority - Sindh, *Flood 2022 in Sindh* (Karachi: PDMA - Sindh, 2023), 12-16, <https://pdma.gos.pk/Documents/Reports/Flood%202022%20In%20Sindh.pdf>.

immediate impact, created lasting consequences for health, education and economic stability across the region.

Figure 1: Lakarna District Flood Impact Summary

Category	Impact	Details
Population Impact	79.10%	Percentage of total district population affected
Displacement	1,071,333	Total people displaced
Casualties	71	Deaths
	7,207	Injuries
Housing Damage	132,618	Total houses damaged
	30,455	Partially damaged houses
	102,163	Fully damaged houses
Agricultural Losses	157,323 acres	Total cropland damaged
	25,451	Livestock casualties

Figure 2: Shikarpur District Flood Impact Summary

Category	Impact	Details
Population Impact	32.40%	Percentage of total district population affected
Displacement	120,000	Total people displaced
Casualties	111	Deaths
	124	Injuries
Housing Damage	91,259	Total houses damaged
	19,047	Partially damaged houses
	72,172	Fully damaged houses
Agricultural Losses	153,623 acres	Total cropland damaged
	7,802	Livestock deaths

The destruction in Shikarpur District revealed vulnerabilities beyond simple water inundation (See Figure 2).¹³ Unlike neighboring regions, Shikarpur's unique challenges stemmed from its extensive feudal land ownership systems and precarious situation with regard to law and order, which significantly complicated evacuation, aid distribution and reconstruction efforts.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Nawabshah (Shaheed Benazirabad) District's flood experience highlighted stark demographic disparities in disaster impact (See Figure 3).¹⁴ Women, children, and the elderly faced unique hardships in evacuation centers and temporary shelters, struggling with limited privacy, inadequate hygiene facilities and restricted access to healthcare. The extended inundation also created multi-seasonal agricultural disruptions, threatening both immediate food security and future harvesting cycles.

Figure 3: Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah) District Flood Impact Summary

Category	Impact	Details
Population Impact	34.80%	Percentage of total district population affected
Displacement	389,529	Total people displaced
Casualties	67	Deaths
	5	Injuries
Housing Damage	114,379	Total houses damaged
	41,588	Partially damaged houses
	72,791	Fully damaged houses
Agricultural Losses	248,773 acres	Total cropland damaged
	32,737	Livestock deaths

These districts shared key risk factors: inadequate early warning systems, limited evacuation routes and gaps in community-level preparedness. Additionally, they faced water infrastructure challenges that contributed to prolonged periods of inundation. Behind these abstract figures lies a profound human tragedy, unfolding across the province.

1.3 Response Mechanisms

Pakistan's disaster response was coordinated by a multi-tiered structure involving the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), with significant capacity variations, particularly at the district level. The initial military deployment involving 20,000 personnel and fleets of aircraft reflected Pakistan's reliance on the armed forces when responding to a disaster.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The financial response also revealed severe gaps in resources:

- The federal government allocated PKR 70 billion (USD 250 million), disbursed mostly through the country's social safety net - the Benazir Income Support Programme,¹⁵ but this was undermined by database exclusion errors, limited rural payment infrastructure and inadequate household benefits (PKR 25,000/USD 90).¹⁶
- International funding fell short, with only 14 percent of the requested USD 816 million disbursed by October 2022.¹⁷

The Sindh government partnered with the WB for housing reconstruction, through the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF),¹⁸ but as this report documents, this initiative has proved insufficient both in budget and accessibility for vulnerable populations.

1.4 Challenges to Post-Flood Recovery

The fact-finding mission observed that nearly three years after the disaster, communities affected by this disaster still face significant challenges to their recovery, despite the funding commitments. The gap between promises and implementation has widened considerably.

The SPHF housing programme has also drawn criticism for providing single-room structures without kitchens or toilets. The allocated PKR 300,000 per unit proves insufficient amid rising construction costs, forcing survivors to:

- Live in substandard conditions without basic amenities.
- Take on significant debt to complete the building of essential facilities.
- Remain in temporary shelters, despite the passage of years.

The mission noted that the flood recovery programme has allegedly unfairly excluded families who initiated self-repairs before official assistance arrived.

The mission also observed that vulnerable groups face heightened challenges, such as:

- Women and children struggle with limited access to healthcare
- Disruptions in education continue and school supplies remain inadequate

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Government of Pakistan et al., *Pakistan Floods 2022: Post-Disaster Needs Assessment Main Report* (Islamabad, October 2022), 13.

¹⁸ Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affectees (SPHF), accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.sphf.gos.pk/>.



Damaged village infrastructure in rural Sindh shows the lasting impact of the 2022 floods on basic services and housing



A typical village showing the traditional mud-brick houses nearly three years after the 2022 floods

- The school dropout rate for female students is higher than for male students
- The lack of proper sanitation facilities in reconstructed housing particularly affects women

Agricultural recovery is hampered by ecological damage. Fields in Shikarpur, Larkana and Nawabshah districts suffer from water-logging and increased salinity, reducing crop yields by over 50 percent compared to pre-flood levels. Government subsidies have failed to match inflation rates, whilst feudal land ownership patterns complicate recovery.

The financing model also raises concerns of climate justice. Despite contributing less than one percent to global emissions,¹⁹ Pakistan's recovery relies on loans from institutions like the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) among others, creating future financial burdens through increased taxation and reduced public services. This debt-based approach contrasts sharply with the Loss and Damage Fund established at the 2022 UN Climate Change Conference (COP27).

The fact-finding mission noted that these issues reflect systemic weaknesses in disaster recovery governance, including poor accountability, politically fragmented responses and the limited capacity for implementation at district-level.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The 2022 floods in Sindh offer the world a case study in climate justice. This research uses two complementary rights-based and climate justice approaches to understand what happened, who was affected, what was done for them and who bears responsibility for their recovery.

Rights-Based Approach

The rights-based approach examines how the floods and subsequent recovery efforts affected people's fundamental rights, which are protected by Pakistan's Constitution and international agreements of the State. They include:

- Right to life and security (Pakistan's Constitution Article 9)²⁰
- Right to adequate housing (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) Article 11)²¹

¹⁹ Muhammad Adnan et al., "Addressing Current Climate Issues in Pakistan: An Opportunity for a Sustainable Future," *Environmental Challenges* 15 (April 1, 2024): 100887, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envc.2024.100887>.

²⁰ National Assembly of Pakistan, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan* (Islamabad: National Assembly of Pakistan, 2012), 7, https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf.

²¹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI), December 16, 1966, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

- Right to health (ICESCR Article 12)²²
- Right to a clean environment (Pakistan's Constitution Article 9A)²³
- Right to dignity and privacy (Pakistan's Constitution Article 14)²⁴
- Right to education (Pakistan's Constitution Article 25A)²⁵
- Right to an adequate standard of living (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 25)²⁶

Focus on Climate Justice

Furthermore, the mission investigated the impact of the floods in relation to climate justice, including it manifesting as “climate apartheid,”²⁷ a situation where the poorest bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change while those responsible are not held accountable. The Global North bears primary responsibility (up to 92 percent)²⁸ for emissions driving climate change, while regions such as Sindh disproportionately suffer²⁹ what environmental scholar Rob Nixon terms ‘slow violence.’³⁰

This analysis was guided by three interconnected frameworks related to this approach:

Climate Debt Theory: Developed nations responsible for historical emissions owe a debt to developing nations facing severe climate impacts.³¹ Sindh's experience shows that this debt remains unacknowledged.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Bakhtawar Manzoor, Anwaar Rana, and Sunbal Islam Chaudhary, “The Paradigm Shift and Milestone for Environmental Justice: A Legal Analysis of Article 9A of the Constitution of Pakistan after 26th Amendment,” *International Journal of Human and Society* 5, no. 01 (Jan-Mar 2025): 1-10, <https://ijhs.com.pk/index.php/IJHS/article/download/804/579/1619>.

²⁴ National Assembly of Pakistan, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁶ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

²⁷ “‘Climate Apartheid’ between Rich and Poor Looms, UN Expert Warns,” BBC News, June 25, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-48755154>.

²⁸ Rishika Pardikar, “Global North Is Responsible for 92% of Excess Emissions,” EOS, October 28, 2020, <https://eos.org/articles/global-north-is-responsible-for-92-of-excess-emissions>.

²⁹ “Global North and Global South: How Climate Change Uncovers Global Inequalities,” Generation Climate Europe, May 10, 2022, <https://gceurope.org/global-north-and-global-south-how-climate-change-uncovers-global-inequalities/>.

³⁰ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2jbsgw>.

³¹ Tristan Bove, “Climate Debt and Justice: How Much Do We Really Owe?,” Earth.Org, November 9, 2021, <https://earth.org/climate-debt-and-justice-how-much-do-we-really-owe/>.

Environmental Colonialism: Colonial-era exploitation patterns persist through climate impacts and responses.³² The province's reliance on loan-based recovery financing reinforces historical dependencies.

Capabilities Approach: The floods significantly compromised local communities' basic freedoms and capabilities, undermining physical security, economic opportunities, and overall well-being.³³

Together, these approaches provide an analytical framework that connects local experiences to global responsibilities. The rights-based approach identifies specific obligations and violations, while the climate justice approach addresses the broader structural inequalities that shape vulnerability and recovery. This integrated framework enables us to examine both immediate recovery failures and their deeper causes, creating a foundation for developing effective, equitable solutions.

Moreover, these theoretical concepts operate within a historical context where the Washington Consensus policies implemented since the 1970s established neoliberal and free market frameworks prioritising economic growth over environmental sustainability globally, especially in the Global South.³⁴ This created structural traps where environmental regulations are sacrificed for investment, increasing climate vulnerability - what ethicist Henry Shue calls 'compounding injustice.'³⁵

1.6 Report Structure

The subsequent chapters of this report examine in detail the different dimensions of the 2022 flood disaster and its aftermath. Chapter 2 presents the methodology and mission objectives, detailing the research approach and data collection methods. Chapter 3 presents the empirical findings from the fact-finding mission, documenting the lived experiences of affected people across the three focus districts through firsthand accounts and observational data. Chapter 4 analyses the governance and institutional frameworks that shaped the disaster response, identifying the structural weaknesses and gaps in implementation that have hindered effective recovery. Chapter 5 evaluates the

³² "Environmental Colonialism," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society*, ed. Robert W. Kolb (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2018), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381503.n393>.

³³ Ingrid Robeyns and Morten Fibieger Byskov, "The Capability Approach," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, Summer 2023 (Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab, 2023), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/capability-approach/>.

³⁴ "The Washington Consensus Reconsidered: Towards a New Global Governance," Oxford Academic, accessed March 10, 2025, <https://academic.oup.com/book/34854>.

³⁵ Henry Shue, *Climate Justice: Vulnerability and Protection* (Oxford University Press, 2014).



Mission member Ahmad Rafay Alam explaining to a group of affected villagers about how the floods of 2022 are connected to climate change

By presenting this analysis, the report aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse about climate justice, disaster governance and the rights of climate-affected populations, from the Global South perspective.

assistance. Finally, Chapter 6 synthesises the findings and presents recommendations for policy reform at local, national and international levels, outlining specific actions to address both immediate recovery needs and long-term structural vulnerabilities.

financing mechanisms for recovery, paying special attention to issues of debt sustainability and climate justice while examining both domestic resource mobilisation and international

By presenting this analysis, the report aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse about climate justice, disaster governance and the rights of climate-affected populations, from the Global South perspective. It seeks to inform policy interventions that can address both immediate recovery needs and long-term structural vulnerabilities in regions facing escalating climate risks.

Chapter 2:

Justice-Centred Research Methodology

This research puts climate justice at the centre, giving priority to voices often overlooked in standard disaster assessments. It recognises that disasters do not affect everyone equally, and their impact varies based on existing inequalities, power relationships and social vulnerabilities. Official disaster assessments often focus mainly on physical damage and economic losses. In contrast, this approach examines how disasters affect different aspects of people's lives, particularly for those who have the least voice in official recovery processes.

2.1 Research Objectives

The SAHR fact-finding mission's objective was to examine the ways in which human rights and the principles of climate justice translate into actual recovery practices. This document analyses the manifestation of global climate inequalities within local recovery strategies, focusing on three key areas:

- Power in recovery decisions: Who makes decisions about recovery priorities? Who controls resources? How are beneficiaries selected?
- Unequal vulnerability: How do existing inequalities in land ownership, gender, disability, and economic status affect both disaster impact and access to recovery assistance?
- Climate justice principles in action: How are concepts such as climate debt, historical responsibility and fair burden-sharing either applied or ignored in actual recovery efforts?

Additionally, the fact-finding mission pursued four specific objectives:

- Examining recovery through a capabilities lens: How did recovery programmes either enhance or reduce people's fundamental rights, freedoms and wellbeing? The 'capabilities approach' refers to an evaluation of policies based on whether they expand people's ability to live dignified lives with meaningful choices.
- Documenting climate justice from a Global South perspective: Did recovery efforts reflect the principle that those who contributed the most to climate change should bear more responsibility in addressing its impacts?
- Analysing power relationships in governance: Did recovery systems create new dependencies or reinforce historical patterns where outside experts control decisions affecting local communities?



Flood survivors from multiple villages gather to meet with the fact-finding mission

- Evaluating financial support models: Do loan-based recovery mechanisms build long-term community resilience or do they create new burdens for future generations?

2.2 Mission and Site Selection

The fact-finding mission included Ahmad Rafay Alam, environmental rights lawyer and SAHR Bureau Member, Mohamad Tahseen, Executive Director of South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAPPK) and former SAHR Bureau Member, Farooq Tariq, General Secretary of the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee and long-standing SAHR member, and Shahnaz Sheedi of SAPPK. The mission was facilitated by SAPPK.

Three districts in the Sindh province were carefully selected for this study:

- Larkana: To examine how physical damage translated into social impacts.
- Shikarpur: To investigate how unequal land distribution affected access to recovery assistance.



Mission members conducting a focus group discussion with flood-affected community members

- Nawabshah: To assess agricultural recovery challenges for landless workers. This selection allowed the mission to compare different vulnerability patterns, and it also represented diverse ecological and social contexts within the province.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Several research methods were used to gather diverse perspectives on flood recovery:

- Interviews: Detailed conversations were conducted with government officials, representatives of organisations implementing recovery programmes, and community members affected by floods. For example, officials from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh were interviewed to understand the official response plan; later, there were meetings with the residents of villages that were impacted by the floods, to learn how the PDMA plan was set up on the ground.
- Focus group discussions: The mission held group conversations in all three districts, making sure to include marginalised groups that were affected by the floods. This allowed them to hear collective experiences and understand how community members interpreted recovery efforts.



Community members raise their hands to participate in discussions about their flood recovery experiences

- Direct observation: The mission visited reconstruction sites and damaged agricultural lands to observe the quality of housing reconstruction and the state of recovery, at firsthand.
- Document analysis: Official documents, policy plans, implementation guidelines and monitoring reports were reviewed and the stated intentions were compared with actual outcomes.

2.4 Stakeholder Engagement

The mission engaged stakeholders at multiple levels, from heads and employees of institutions to leaders and members of political parties and communities at village level:

- Government authorities: Including PDMA Sindh and district officials.
- Implementation partners: Including SPHF and other local level organisations directly involved in flood recovery work.
- The affected population: Prioritising voices that are often left out of official accounts, particularly landless agricultural workers, female-headed households and persons with disabilities.

This layered approach allowed the mission to trace the ways in which recovery policies moved from paper to practice and to identify the connects and disconnects between official narratives and people's living experiences - crucial elements in understanding how climate apartheid and justice function in real life.

2.5 Limitations

The research followed the ethical principles of working in disaster-affected communities, including informed consent (ensuring participants understood and agreed to share information with the mission), confidentiality (protecting identities) and the commitment to do no harm.

The research followed the ethical principles of working in disaster-affected communities, including informed consent (ensuring participants understood and agreed to share information with the mission), confidentiality (protecting identities) and the commitment to do no harm.

The mission faced some limitations, including:

- Time constraints that limited the length of time spent with each community visited
- Small sample size as compared to the entire province
- Inconsistencies in published data
- Participants' tendency to share different information depending on the interviewer's gender, perceived authority or affiliation

Despite these challenges, the use of multiple methods of data and information gathering allowed the mission to develop empirically supported conclusions about the actual status and effectiveness of the flood recovery processes in the Sindh province. Therefore, the findings of the mission ensure that the analysis stays grounded in human rights and the principles of climate justice, while maintaining research integrity.

Chapter 3: Rights Violations in Sindh's Recovery



Mission members engage with flood survivors to understand how existing power structures shaped disaster vulnerability and recovery outcomes

The 2022 floods in the Sindh province revealed that climate disasters do not affect all populations equally. The field investigation of the mission demonstrates how these floods exposed long-standing structural inequalities, whilst creating new patterns of vulnerability. These findings provide evidence of how exclusion operates at ground level. They also reveal that vulnerability to climate disasters stems not primarily from natural hazards but from socio-political arrangements determining who bears disproportionate risks and who receives adequate protection.

3.1 Feudal Land Structures

Sindh's entrenched feudal land ownership system fundamentally determined disaster vulnerability and recovery outcomes. With Pakistan's highest incidence of landlessness, highest tenancy rates and lowest land ownership,³⁶ the province demonstrates how

³⁶ Centre d'Encadrement et Développement des Anciens Combattants. "Discrimination and Denial for the People in Pakistan's Sindh." United Nations General Assembly, A/HRC/57/NGO/134, August 12, 2024. <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g24/159/29/pdf/g2415929.pdf>.

historical power structures shape contemporary climate vulnerability. During field interviews in Nawabshah district, a local journalist provided disturbing testimony about how flood management decisions reflected existing power structures: “When embankments were being breached [by the relevant authorities], they evidently occurred near the villages of the poor, to save the lands of the landlords.” This case highlights that environmental vulnerability becomes weaponised within existing power structures, turning ‘natural’ disasters into a deliberate perpetuation of social hierarchy through environmental means.

Documentation Barriers for the Landless

Landless tenants faced particularly severe barriers to recovery, due to issues relating to their documentation. Accessing land primarily through verbal agreements, these populations lack formal tenancy documentation or ownership records, making them systematically ineligible for programmes such as SPHF, despite being among the most affected. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirms this exclusion, noting considerable percentages of flood-affected rural Sindh residents lacking formal land or property ownership.³⁷ While the Sindh government’s initiatives based on the Goth-Abad Act awarded approximately 10,000 land titles as of June 2024, this represents only a fraction of the affected population that need secure land rights. Meanwhile, two options created to address land rights issues—voluntary land donation from owners or the creation of 10-year rental agreements—perpetuate dependency relationships, rather than addressing the issues of land inequality that drive climate vulnerability.

The Power of Feudal Elites

The mission observed that power dynamics with feudal lords shaped recovery outcomes across affected regions. Feudal elites maintain control over government/public institutions, including the police, the courts, district administrations, education and health services,³⁸ while at the same time participating in governance as elected representatives.³⁹ This concentration of power has in turn manifested in aid distribution patterns, with multiple respondents reporting political discrimination and resource seizure. As one interviewee in Nawabshah said, “Feudal lords...held the aid and stored it and when it started spoiling they threw it,” exposing how the prevalent power structures diverted resource distribution from the intended beneficiaries.

³⁷ International Organization for Migration (IOM). *Flood Response (2022-2023): Housing, Land and Property (HLP): Overview of Key Issues in Rural Sindh*. Pakistan: IOM, January 2023, 1. <https://pakistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11121/files/documents/2023-04/HLP%20Report-20%20Feb%202023-v5.pdf>.

³⁸ Sadiq Bhanbhro, “Dissecting the Anatomy of Feudal Power in Sindh,” *The Friday Times*, April 17, 2023, <https://thefridaytimes.com/17-Apr-2023/dissecting-the-anatomy-of-feudal-power-in-sindh>.

³⁹ Muhammad Hassan Khoso, Saifullah Jamali, and Azadar Hussain Khuwaja, “Feudalism and Class Differences in Sindh: A Study of Shah Abdul Latif’s Perspective,” *Journal of Asian Development Studies* 12, no. 3 (2023): 1236, <https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2023.12.3.97>.

3.2 Governance Failures

The state response to unprecedented flooding revealed critical weaknesses in governance systems at multiple levels. In the light of this discussion, Pakistan's public institutional frameworks proved to be inadequately equipped for the scale of this climate-induced disaster, with fragmented authority and unclear responsibilities between agencies creating confusion and inefficiency.

CASE STUDY: Usman Brohi Village - Institutional Invisibility

During the Nawabshah focus group meeting, an interviewee told the mission that the Usman Brohi village in Union Council Chanesar never received a single visit from the government's damage assessment team. The interviewee described that the village was completely inundated during the floods and even the military rescue teams could not reach them. They further described that no SPHF house was constructed in their village, because they were not on the government's list of beneficiaries. This case illustrates how governance and rescue failures translated into a complete exclusion from recovery. This absence was not merely due to access difficulties as it was clearly evident that damage assessment teams had visited neighboring areas.

This institutional invisibility created a cascading effect: without damage assessment, residents became automatically ineligible for housing reconstruction programs; without official recognition of their status as flood victims, they could not access emergency cash transfers given by the government; without documentation of damages in agricultural losses, they could not receive seed or fertiliser support for the next cultivating season. Three years after the disaster, in 2025, the village remains largely unrecovered, with residents reporting to the mission that they have simply "disappeared from the government's view."

Bureaucratic Barriers to Accessing Aid

Bureaucratic obstructions have undermined equitable access to aid. The mission's interviews with affected communities drew attention to people waiting in long queues to process cases with banks, women facing indignities while striving to resolve their issues related to the flood recovery process, and individuals traveling from remote areas at considerable expense, to reach administrative offices.

CASE STUDY: Women's Dignity Violations in Relief Access

During focus group discussions in rural Sindh, female flood survivors described violations against their dignity and privacy and the compromising of their personal safety while attempting to access relief. One survivor reported: "Women were being disgraced on the roads, and people often had to borrow money to travel from remote areas to the city center where the administration offices and banks were located." The centralisation of flood recovery processes in urban centers created severe hardships for women, who faced both difficulties in finding transportation and limited mobility - because of the need to fulfil cultural norms requiring male escorts, in the context of a patriarchal environment.

Many reported sleeping overnight in bank premises or government office compounds because they could not afford to travel to and fro, if and when the the processing of matters related to their relief took more time than expected. Some described selling precious possessions to finance these journeys, only to be turned away at the relevant office without receiving any relief, due to documentation issues in their applications. This reflects how administrative procedures themselves become mechanisms of exclusion when designed without consideration for gender-specific barriers and the economic constraints faced by the most vulnerable sections of society when accessing assistance in flood recovery.

Political Interference in Aid Distribution

In Nawabshah, participants alleged that people supporting the Pakistan People's Party -PPP, (which has ruled Sindh for the past 15 years) were included in the list on the basis of political nepotism and those belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party were excluded from the list. Similar allegations emerged in Khanpur Taluka, where respondents reported that some people were given funding for the house based on their connections within the bureaucracy and political circles. This politicisation of aid distribution, also documented by Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights,⁴⁰ reveals how disaster response reinforces rather than challenges the existing power arrangements.

Inadequate Accountability Mechanisms

Monitoring and accountability mechanisms have shown weaknesses. The verification process contained fundamental flaws, such as cases where "A house was photo-

⁴⁰ Najam U. Din, *The 2022 Floods and Challenges for Vulnerable Communities in Sindh: A Rapid Assessment* (Islamabad: National Commission on Human Rights, 2023), 5, <https://nchr.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/When-It-Rains.pdf>.



Meeting in Shikarpur where a political activist criticised that ‘a one room house was being sold as climate justice.’

bombed by another house,” leading to the denial of benefits on questionable grounds. Furthermore, grievance redressal systems have proven particularly inadequate, forcing affected populations to “seek help of others who are more educated or well connected with those in power and authority,” reinforcing the relationships of dependency that are characteristic of environmental colonialism.

3.3 Violations of the Right to Adequate Housing

The SPHF housing scheme revealed critical inadequacies in meeting basic living standards and a violation of the right to adequate housing as established in Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), to which Pakistan is a signatory. Single-room structures considered to be flood resistant, measuring ‘16 by 18 feet’ proved to be grossly insufficient for an average household of seven members, while lacking essential amenities such as kitchens and toilets. According to the United Nations (UN) housing standards, proper housing must have the basic facilities needed for health and daily living - including clean drinking water, ways to cook food, proper lighting, and toilets and washing areas.⁴¹ This flawed design represents not merely technical oversight but fundamental violations of human dignity, particularly affecting women and girls who have additional concerns of privacy.

⁴¹ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), “General Comment No. 4: The Right to Adequate Housing (Art. 11 (1) of the Covenant),” E/1992/23, December 13, 1991. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/cescr/1991/en/53157>.

CASE STUDY: A Polygamous Household in Inadequate Housing

In Shikarpur district, the mission documented the case of a polygamous household forced to inhabit a single room provided through the SPHF programme. A woman testified that “her husband has two wives and to live in this room was difficult for both families.” With no privacy partitions, toilet facilities, or cooking space, the women described daily violations of dignity and privacy and heightened family tensions resulting from inadequate conditions.

Both wives and their children—a total of nine people—shared this single room for all activities including sleeping, eating, studying and socialising. Without sanitation facilities, the women faced particular difficulty in maintaining their dignity and privacy during menstruation and in meeting basic hygiene needs. This case illustrates how standardised housing designs that fail to account for diverse family structures and gender-specific needs create living conditions that systematically undermine human dignity and erode the basic capability for daily functioning. This situation involves the violation of multiple rights including:

- *Right to privacy and dignity (Constitution of Pakistan, Article 14)⁴²*
- *Right to adequate housing with sufficient space (ICESCR Article 11)⁴³*
- *Right to culturally appropriate accommodation (UN CESCR General Comment No. 4)⁴⁴*
- *Right to basic facilities for sanitation and cooking (UN CESCR General Comment No. 4)⁴⁵*

One political activist in Shikarpur aptly noted, “One room house was being sold as climate justice,” referring to the disconnect between programme rhetoric and the lived reality.

Funding Inadequacies in the SPHF Scheme

The allocated PKR 300,000 proved insufficient for construction, with residents reporting actual costs around PKR 500,000. This funding gap forced families into difficult choices: to accumulate debt, compromise the quality of construction or remain in inadequate housing. The construction requirements were substantial: “approximately 6,000 bricks were used to make the base, 13,000 to 15,000 bricks for the development of the room” -

⁴² National Assembly of Pakistan, *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, 10.

⁴³ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

⁴⁴ CESCR, General Comment No. 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*



An incomplete SPHF house showing the single-room design that violates basic standards of adequate housing for multi-member families

making the funding allocation clearly insufficient, based on market realities. According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, housing programmes must provide sufficient resources to ensure minimum adequacy standards are met.⁴⁶ The significant gap between allocation and actual costs demonstrates a failure to meet this standard. Furthermore, this appears to be not merely a financial miscalculation but a structural transfer of disaster costs to the affected people themselves.

Perverse Incentives against Self-Recovery

The SPHF programme's implementation has also revealed problematic exclusion criteria. People who rebuilt their homes with their own funds were systematically excluded, creating perverse incentives against community initiatives. One interviewee in Larkana district reported that some people, while waiting to be included in the government list or the compensation process, started building their own houses and were excluded from the list of beneficiaries. This approach contradicts Principle 29 of

⁴⁶ Leilani Farha (Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing), *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing*, Right to the City, <https://www.right2city.org/news/special-rapporteurs-guidelines-for-the-implementation-of-the-right-to-adequate-housing/>.

the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which emphasises supporting people's own recovery efforts after displacement rather than penalising their initiative.⁴⁷

Health and Sanitation Consequences

The lack of sanitation infrastructure created particular hardships for women and children, with residents having to dig up pits in their gardens to dispose of excrement and empty these pits with shovels and use trolleys to dump their contents in fields or community garbage dumping areas. These repulsive sanitary conditions violate international humanitarian standards and constitutional guarantees of dignified living standards, showing unresolved issues that are still neglected by the disaster recovery process.

This demonstrates how the programme has often created new forms of vulnerability and dependency.



Construction site showing the extensive brick requirements for SPHF houses, illustrating that the allocated PKR 300,000 is insufficient against actual building costs

⁴⁷ UN Commission on Human Rights, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (U.N. Doc. E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, 1998), 344, <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/47949b3f2.pdf>.



Flood-damaged traditional housing with collapsed roof demonstrates why many families were forced to accept inadequate SPHF housing despite its limitations

3.4 Impacts on Vulnerable Groups

Women experienced increased gender inequalities, both during the immediate disaster response and during the period of long-term recovery.

CASE STUDY: Maternal Health Crisis in Allah Dad Jagirani Village

In Allah Dad Jagirani village, Shikarpur District, the mission documented how infrastructure destroyed by floods led to life-threatening conditions for pregnant women. A village elder described how the community's isolation after the floods created a maternal health crisis: "Patients, pregnant women and children, faced the risk of death when being transported to the hospital in emergencies, because the road network connecting the village to the main road was almost completely washed off by the floods."

This specific village had experienced multiple maternal deaths during the post-flood period when women in labour were unable to reach medical facilities in time, due to the devastated local road system. In one case, a woman in obstructed labour was carried on a makeshift stretcher on foot for four kilometers before reaching a point where vehicles could be accessed. She died before reaching the hospital.



Temporary tent shelter with exposed beds highlights the prolonged displacement of flood-affected families, particularly impacting children's health and education

Children's Rights Violations

Educational infrastructure suffered extensive damage during the floods of 2022, with approximately 50 percent of the schools in Sindh province suffering damage and many still non-functional, as the mission observed. In this situation, the children faced severe disruptions to their education and in healthcare. Girls especially faced compounded challenges, with economic pressures compelling many families to withdraw them from school as a means of reducing domestic expenses, or send them for domestic unpaid care work, or to follow the patriarchal mindset of discriminating against women; as a Larkana woman interviewee said—"What would a girl do, going to school?"

The mission also observed widespread malnutrition, stunted growth and the spread of disease, including diarrhea, gastroenteritis, tuberculosis and malaria among children in the flood-affected areas.



Children, particularly girls, among flood-affected communities face higher school dropout rates due to economic pressures and family labour needs

CASE STUDY: Educational Deprivation during the post-flood period, 2022

In Nawabshah district, the mission interviewed a teacher who provided stark testimony of post-flood educational conditions: “Children who come to the school do not have shoes on feet, their clothes are patched or torn. In the school, teachers do not have desks. Children do not have notebooks and books, their right to education is being denied and violated.”

“The school building itself had been minimally repaired but lack basic facilities of educational infrastructure. Children have been sitting on bare floors in a room with partial roofing, exposed to elements even during extreme weather.”

Teachers reported a significant drop in school attendance, compared to the pre-flood period, especially in girls from the poorest households who are now working to support the family’s recovery efforts. In this way, climate disasters create long-term disruptions to education, with the potential consequences lasting generations, especially when recovery efforts have prioritised physical infrastructure over the quality of children’s education and their access to it.



A person with disability using a hand-powered tricycle illustrates the additional challenges faced by differently-abled flood survivors in accessing recovery assistance

Disability Exclusion

The mission found minimal evidence of adapted housing construction, despite SPHF officials mentioning disability categorisation, for example the use of braille, in their housing schemes. Healthcare access was severely compromised, with reports indicating “no hospital for physically and mentally ill people in many areas.” The destruction of transportation infrastructure particularly impacted those with mobility challenges, leading to isolation and dependency, while limiting access to essential services relevant for differently-abled persons or persons with special needs. Recovery programmes appear to have failed to address the specific needs of diverse populations, by relying on standardised approaches for all. This has also revealed patterns of discrimination that are prohibited under both international human rights law and Pakistan’s Constitution.

During interviews, farmers told the mission that crop yields declined from 800 to 300 units, representing a 62.5 percent reduction, indicating potential long-term agricultural challenges due to waterlogging and increased soil salinity. This collapse of productivity threatens both immediate food security and long-term rural livelihoods, creating potential pressures of climate displacement as agricultural viability diminishes.

representing a 62.5 percent reduction, indicating potential long-term agricultural challenges due to waterlogging and increased soil salinity. This collapse of productivity threatens both immediate food security and long-term rural livelihoods, creating potential pressures of climate displacement as agricultural viability diminishes. At the meetings held with the flood-affected people, the mission noted numerous cases of distress asset sales as families liquidated personal possessions to survive, while taking high-interest loans for basic necessities.

Rising Agricultural Input Costs

Rising agricultural input costs created additional burdens for already struggling farmers. The interviewees reported significant pricing disparities between cash and credit purchases - “a bag of agricultural inputs that cost PKR 18,000 in cash would cost PKR 22,000 when purchased on credit” - creating cycles of debt, particularly affecting small farmers lacking capital reserves. This credit dependency reinforced existing power dynamics between small farmers and larger landowners, while Pakistan’s economic crisis—with inflation reaching 38 percent by mid-2023,⁴⁸—further drove up agricultural input prices, making recovery even more difficult for flood-affected farmers.

Livestock Sector Devastation

The mission observed that the livestock sector, traditionally a crucial safety net for rural communities, suffered severe losses due to the floods of 2022. Beyond the immediate animal deaths, the destruction of grazing lands and fodder sources led to ongoing challenges of viability. Many of the flood-affected families were raising livestock under share arrangements with larger landowners, causing their losses to extend beyond the loss of livestock to the loss of primary income sources and economic security.

3.5 Economic Devastation

Agricultural Productivity Collapse

Since the destruction caused by the floods of 2022, agricultural productivity has suffered dramatic declines to this day, with long-term implications for economic security. During interviews, farmers told the mission that crop yields declined from 800 to 300 units,

⁴⁸ Reuters, “Pakistan posts record inflation for second consecutive month,” June 1, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/pakistans-annual-inflation-rose-38-yy-may-2023-06-01/>.



Livestock remains vital for rural communities despite flood devastation

These empirical findings of the mission collectively demonstrate how the 2022 floods exacerbated existing structural inequalities while creating new cycles of vulnerability. The next chapter examines the governance and institutional frameworks that shaped these outcomes, analysing the systemic weaknesses undermining effective and equitable recovery.

Chapter 4:

Governance Failures that Undermine Rights to Recovery

The governance and institutional dimensions of flood recovery revealed to the mission the fundamental weaknesses in Pakistan's disaster management systems, when confronted with climate-induced catastrophes. These deficiencies span legal frameworks, institutional capacity and implementation mechanisms, in turn creating systemic barriers to an effective and equitable recovery process whilst reinforcing existing patterns of exclusion as documented in the preceding chapter.

4.1 Gaps in the Legal Framework

Constitutional and International Commitments

In theory, Pakistan's constitution provides protection for disaster-affected populations, yet gaps in implementation have severely undermined these protection mechanisms, in the flood recovery process. While the constitution explicitly guarantees the right to life (Article 9); a clean and healthy environment to live in (Article 9A); dignity and privacy in living standards (Article 14); and an education to uplift living standards (Article 25A), there have nevertheless been systematic violations of these rights which—together with the flawed efforts at implementation—have delayed the recovery process, and the mission's attention was drawn to these issues.

The SAHR mission notes that international obligations relating to environmental rights, including commitments under the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),⁴⁹ have not been satisfactorily incorporated into domestic legal frameworks. While Pakistan demonstrates willingness to participate in international climate governance through formal agreement ratification,⁵⁰ the absence of effective domestic legislative incorporation is a severe hindrance to the implementation of proactive measures.

⁴⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan, "Climate Change," accessed March 16, 2025, <https://mofa.gov.pk/climate-change/>.

⁵⁰ United Nations Development Programme, "Pakistan," Climate Promise, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://climatepromise.undp.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/pakistan>.



Mission members meet with PDMA Sindh officials who acknowledged the absence of specific legal provisions for environmental taxation or climate finance mechanisms

The country's Climate Change Act 2017 and Environmental Protection Act 1997 establish institutional mechanisms for climate adaptation and environmental protection, but field findings during the fact-finding mission revealed significant gaps between these frameworks and local capabilities for implementation. At the meeting with the mission, the PDMA Sindh also acknowledged these issues, noting that so far, there have not been any specific legal provisions for environmental taxation or climate finance mechanisms, despite Pakistan's increasing climate vulnerability.

Limitations of the National Disaster Management Act

Even though the National Disaster Management Act of 2010 established a multi-tiered system for disaster response in Pakistan, it failed to incorporate crucial elements of climate-induced disaster management. The Act focuses on traditional response mechanisms rather than climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, and this has left

the authorities ill-equipped for the complex challenges of extreme disasters such as the floods of 2022. Consequently, critical gaps include inadequate provisions for:

- The integration of early warning systems with community-level response mechanisms
- The capability of climate-specific disaster preparedness protocols that address the unique features of climate-induced events
- A clear delineation of coordinated and delegated responsibilities and collaborations among the relevant multiple agencies, across the tiers of governance
- Sustainable funding mechanisms for disaster prevention and mitigation that cover the progressive processes of identified needs, beyond the emergency response
- Disregarding community-based disaster risk reduction approaches that use local knowledge and capacities
- Lack of connections to international climate finance mechanisms that could provide resources for disaster response and recovery

The Supreme Court of Pakistan acknowledged these systemic weaknesses in the Province of Sindh in the case of the Chief Minister and others vs. Sartaj Hyder - remarking that relief efforts were “Neither sufficient, nor is it effectively managed,” and highlighting coordination and timeframe issues as primary obstacles.⁵¹ This judicial observation confirms that the failures of governance extend beyond the challenges of individual implementation, to systemic deficiencies in the disaster management framework as a whole.

4.2 Institutional Fragmentation

Theoretical Structure versus Practical Implementation

The three-tiered disaster management structure comprising NDMA, PDMA and DDMA, showed significant limitations in practice, despite possessing theoretical coherence. Though clearly conceptualised on paper, this institutional architecture evidences significant coordination failures, flaws in resource allocation and gaps in accountability during actual implementation. The PDMA Sindh too, acknowledged that the floods served as an ‘eye opener,’ exposing deficiencies in the disaster response mechanisms for climate-induced catastrophes, despite preparations being made in advance.

⁵¹ *Province of Sindh through Chief Minister and others v. Sartaj Hyder*, Civil Petitions No. 943-K of 2022 (Supreme Court of Pakistan, October 21, 2022), https://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/downloads_judgements/c.p._943_k_2022.pdf.



SPHF implementing partners, including Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO) which served as the district-level implementer mentioned throughout the mission's findings

CASE STUDY: Dhand Village - A Bureaucratic Labyrinth

In Dhand village, Larkana district, the mission observed that the fragmentation of institutional responsibility has created insurmountable obstacles for flood survivors seeking assistance. It was evident that on the ground, multiple agencies operated in isolation: the SPHF as the overseeing body building houses for those affected by the flood; the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) - a non-governmental organisation as the implementing partner in the district; the government's revenue officials for land verification and the banks that disburse funds from the SPHF - each functioning without effective information-sharing or coordination.

Villagers reported being caught in bureaucratic loops, with one resident saying: "I visited four different offices, and each directed me elsewhere." Without clear communication between the agencies, the residents found themselves carrying their relevant documentation from one office to the other, often traveling long distances at significant expense, only to be told that they needed additional verification or that their cases were being processed by different departments. Community organisers reported that, "Due to poor communication from government to grassroots, some people do not even know that their names are on the government list as beneficiaries."

Thus, the fragmentation of institutional responsibility has resulted not just in inefficiency, but also in the creation of a labyrinth of systematic exclusion of those who are the most vulnerable, who lack the resources, connections and knowledge to navigate the complex bureaucratic systems that have turned the flood recovery process—which should have been an all-inclusive support mechanism—into an arduous obstacle course.

Systemic Institutional Weaknesses

The critical institutional gaps identified by the fact-finding mission include a limited preparedness for climate-induced disasters, the absence of a clear process for environmental taxation or credit mechanisms and inadequate drainage infrastructure on the ground. These setbacks are reflected in the broader systemic challenges that exist, including poor urban planning, poor water resource management, deficiencies in the maintenance of infrastructure, extraneous governance structures and the lack of competence and capacity in disaster risk reduction. As a result, the extremely vulnerable populations who have been universally affected by the floods in 2022, still face numerous hardships in accessing flood recovery redress and compensation.

4.3 The Dynamics of International Aid

World Bank Partnership Challenges

The World Bank partnership mechanisms—while providing significant funding commitments—revealed many challenges in implementation, which characterise the engagement of international financial institutions in climate disaster recovery worldwide. While the WB pledged USD 2 billion to support Pakistan’s flood recovery, including USD 500 million for housing reconstruction in Sindh,⁵² the mission’s field observations noted the slow-moving disbursement process, which failed to meet the flood-affected community’s urgent needs. These delays in implementation create particular hardships for vulnerable populations who lack the resources to bridge the gaps in, forcing many into the accumulation of debt or having to remain continually reliant on temporary shelters.

Climate Justice Implications of Financing Structures

The Asian Development Bank’s USD 400 million ‘concessional’ loan for housing reconstruction carries 1.0 percent annual interest, with 40-year terms.⁵³ The USD 475 million Emergency Flood Assistance Project has similar conditions.⁵⁴ Though more favorable than commercial lending, these debt-based approaches ultimately force desperate communities to bear the financial burdens of climate disaster through future taxation and reduced public services. This approach contradicts the principles of climate debt theory, which would suggest grants rather than loans, as appropriate compensation from historically high-emitting nations to climate-vulnerable communities.

⁵² “World Bank Pledges \$2bn for Pakistan’s Flood Recovery,” *Profit by Pakistan Today*, October 9, 2024, <https://profit.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/10/09/world-bank-pledges-2bn-for-pakistans-flood-recovery/>.

⁵³ Asian Development Bank, *Sindh Emergency Housing Reconstruction Project: Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors*, Project Number 57323-001 (Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, July 2024), 7, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/57323/57323-001-rrp-en.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Emergency Flood Assistance Project*, Project Number 56312-001, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.adb.org/projects/56312-001/main>.



A village elder describes the challenges faced by his community in accessing recovery assistance

SPHF Implementation Gaps

The implementation of housing reconstruction through the SPHF revealed stark contrasts between the theoretical frameworks and practical realities. While officially guided by the principles of owner-driven housing reconstruction, technical assistance and climate-resilient house design, the mission's field observations documented minimal evidence of these principles in practice. The houses that were completed using programme funding appeared to be vulnerable to future disasters, due to minimal technical supervision and the poor quality of materials, in turn due to low funding. At the same time, ongoing issues of land ownership have also caused significant hindrances to the housing project, contradicting claims that it would benefit 800,000 landless people.

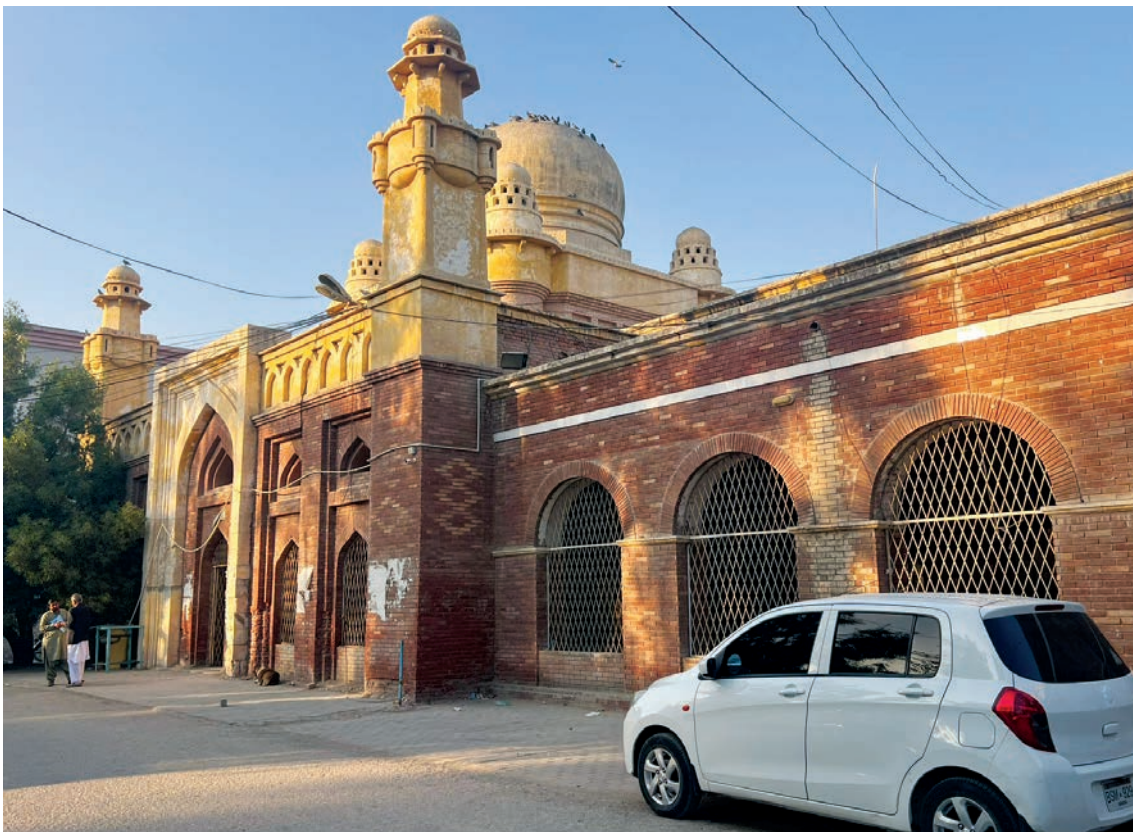
4.4 Drawbacks in Local Implementation

The SAHR mission's field observations across the selected districts reveal how institutional frameworks translated (or more frequently, failed to translate) into effective action at the local level. In Shikarpur district, the Deputy Commissioner's office described the challenges faced by local administration: destroyed schools, the lack of healthcare

The SAHR mission's field observations across the selected districts reveal how institutional frameworks translated (or more frequently, failed to translate) into effective action at the local level.

facilities and persistent issues of law and order which continue to hamper service delivery. These conditions reflect not merely the impacts of the disaster but show the failure of

governance to establish a resilient infrastructure and service delivery systems capable of withstanding climate shocks and their consequences.



Deputy Commissioner's office, Larkana - the district administrative center where flood survivors faced bureaucratic barriers in accessing recovery assistance

CASE STUDY: Allah Dad Jagirani Village - A Failure of Implementation

Allah Dad Jagirani village in Rustam, Shikarpur district, exemplifies the gulf between commitments to funding recovery and ground-level implementation. With a population of 585 people including 320 children, this village remained largely untouched by reconstruction efforts, two years after the floods occurred, despite substantial international funding received for the recovery process.

The mission's direct observation documented the complete absence of basic infrastructure: An area completely washed-out by the floods, with no road network, no drainage system, no electricity and infested with malaria. These conditions are exacerbated by inadequate sanitation facilities and a lack of access to healthcare as additional, key parts of the problem.

This case study clearly shows how failures of governance manifest in uneven recovery patterns, with certain communities experiencing systematic negligence despite substantial international funding received by the government's flood-recovery administration. It also reveals how decisions relating to resource allocation that are made at high levels of governance often fail to translate into concrete implementation on the ground, for the benefit of the most marginalised communities.

Chapter 5:

Restrictions to Climate Justice in Sindh

This chapter examines the ways in which failures in the flood recovery process stem from climate finance arrangements that reinforce, rather than challenge, inequality among people. The chapter explores three key aspects of climate finance: the gaps in knowledge that limit community input, the contradictions within international financial frameworks and the debt-based mechanisms that foster new cycles of vulnerability.

5.1 Knowledge Asymmetries

Despite experiencing severe climate impacts, the flood-affected communities in Sindh absolutely lack basic understanding of climate finance. The mission found that most residents recognise certain features of climate change, but do not fully understand their causes or financial implications. For instance, a woman in Larkana's Dhand village stated that she has experienced the weather becoming hotter and hotter since 2010, but could not explain the reason for it.

The mission observed that this knowledge gap created three major problems:

Charity vs. Rights: Without an understanding of the legal basis of climate funding, these distressed people view all assistance as charity, rather than their rightful compensation. This weakens their ability to demand accountability when implementation fails.

Technical Setbacks: The complexity of climate finance excludes those with limited formal education. When people do not understand financing mechanisms, government agencies and international institutions can maintain exclusive control over such decisions.

Religious Interpretations: Many villagers attribute climate disasters to divine punishment. People informed the mission that the floods were the wrath of God brought upon them by themselves, for they had sin. These beliefs also limit their ability to demand compensation from those responsible for emissions.

However, religious frameworks also offer potential entry points for education about climate justice. For example, discussing these issues in mosques during Friday sermons can help clarify some of these misunderstandings.

Education is critical to addressing these knowledge gaps. The World Bank identifies education as the strongest predictor of climate change awareness.⁵⁵ This knowledge gap is not just a problem of information but a power imbalance. The requirements of technical knowledge exclude those most affected by disasters from participating in the financial decisions that determine their recovery.

The Loss and Damage Fund (L&DF) established at COP27—the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—acknowledges historical responsibility for climate impacts. Yet Sindh’s actual recovery is funded primarily through loans that must be repaid with interest. Despite contributing less than 1 percent of global emissions, Pakistan must take on debt to recover from the impacts of climate change, caused primarily by others.

5.2 Framework Contradictions

The 2022 floods in Sindh exposed major contradictions in global climate finance. Despite international rhetoric about climate justice, the actual financing mechanisms often reinforce inequality. These contradictions include:

Loss and Damage vs. Development Loans: The Loss and Damage Fund (L&DF) established at COP27—the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—acknowledges historical responsibility for climate impacts.⁵⁶ Yet Sindh’s actual recovery is funded primarily through loans that must be repaid with interest. Despite contributing less than 1 percent of global emissions,⁵⁷ Pakistan must take on debt to recover from the impacts of climate change, caused primarily by others.

Historical Responsibility vs. Future Debt: The principles of climate justice demand accountability from nations that are historically responsible for emissions; besides which, the financing implemented in Sindh also creates future debt obligations for the victims of climate change. The ADB’s USD 400 million housing reconstruction loan (with 1.0 percent interest over 40 years) may seem generous, but it fundamentally shifts financial responsibility from the historical emitters to the current victims.

⁵⁵ World Bank, *Education and Climate Change* (Washington, DC: World Bank, November 8, 2022), <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/523b6ac03f2c643f93b9c043d48eddc1-0200022022/related/WB-education-and-climate-11-08-22-e-version.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Ajaz Ahmed, “The Loss and Damage Fund: A Historic Triumph,” *Dawn*, December 4, 2023, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1794818>.

⁵⁷ “The Carbon Brief Profile: Pakistan,” *Carbon Brief*, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://interactive.carbonbrief.org/the-carbon-brief-profile-pakistan/index.html>.

Global Equity Rhetoric vs. Resource Extraction: International climate agreements such as the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC, acknowledge the principles of equity.⁵⁸ However, financing mechanisms often extract resources from climate-vulnerable regions through loan repayments. When recovery loans require interest payments, they create long-term financial outflows from affected regions to financial institutions in high-emitting nations.

Voluntary Commitments vs. Binding Obligations: Global climate governance relies on voluntary contributions rather than binding compensation frameworks. The unfulfilled goal of providing USD 100 billion annually to developing countries⁵⁹ shows the limitations of voluntary approaches. This creates justified skepticism about future mechanisms like the L&DF.

Public Interest vs. Corporate Influence: Climate-destructive sectors receive far more financial support than the victims of climate change. ActionAid research shows these sectors receiving subsidies averaging USD 677 billion annually in Global South countries - approximately 20 times the value of climate finance grants from Global North nations.⁶⁰

5.3 A Critique of Debt-Based Recovery

The debt-based financing used for Sindh's flood recovery appears to create 'climate traps,'⁶¹ where recovery approaches meant to address current impacts actually increase vulnerability to future disasters, through debt obligations and resource diversions. These debt mechanisms compromise the capabilities of these distressed communities in several ways:

Reduced Financial Capacity: Loan-based recovery creates long-term debt service obligations that divert government resources from essential services to debt repayment. Pakistan's total public debt already absorbs approximately 60 percent of the tax revenue in debt servicing.⁶² Additional recovery loans increase this burden and further limit the nation's financial capacity for climate adaptation.

⁵⁸ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *Equity into the PA Regime* (Bonn: UNFCCC, 2022), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/202210210914---Equity%20into%20the%20PA%20regime%20\(1\).pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/202210210914---Equity%20into%20the%20PA%20regime%20(1).pdf).

⁵⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Climate Finance and the USD 100 Billion Goal," accessed March 16, 2025, <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/climate-finance-and-the-usd-100-billion-goal.html>.

⁶⁰ ActionAid, *Industries Fuelling Climate Crisis Are Draining Public Funds in Global South: New Report*, 2024, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2024/industries-fuelling-climate-crisis-are-draining-public-funds-global-south-new>.

⁶¹ Climate Refugees, "IPCC: Refugees & IDPs," March 17, 2022, <https://www.climate-refugees.org/spotlight/2022/3/17/ipcc-refugees-idps>.

⁶² Aasim M. Husain, "Resolving Pakistan's Debt Problems," FinnDevLab, October 26, 2023, <https://findevlab.org/resolving-pakistans-debt-problems/>.

Limited Decision-Making Authority: Loan conditions often require policy adjustments that align with the priorities of the lending institutions, rather than those of local communities. This compromises autonomy in decision-making regarding adaptation approaches and recovery priorities, potentially explaining the gaps in implementation.

Diverted Adaptation Resources: Debt servicing requirements reduce the resources available for proactive adaptation investments. This could lead to a situation where each disaster further diminishes the country's capacity for vulnerability reduction measures, in direct contradiction of the principles of climate resilience.

Compound Vulnerability: Inadequate housing with few or no climate resilience features, raises apprehensions about future climate impacts. When combined with debt obligations, this makes a compound vulnerability where each dimension reinforces the other.

Constrained Dignified Recovery: The gap between actual reconstruction costs and the amounts allocated (PKR 500,000 required vs. PKR 300,000 allocated for housing) forced families to either accept inadequate housing or to take on additional debt. This demonstrates that financing constraints directly compromise a person's prospects for dignified recovery.

Pakistan has attempted to address these challenges through its National Climate Finance Strategy, which seeks to mobilise financial resources for climate adaptation.⁶³ The strategy explores instruments such as green bonds and blended finance, while estimating a USD 348 billion climate finance gap by 2030.⁶⁴ However, this approach primarily focuses on attracting investment rather than by challenging the fundamental injustice of who eventually bears the costs of climate-related disasters.

These considerations demand a fundamental change in climate disaster financing. Moving from 'recovery financing' to 'climate reparations' would acknowledge climate impacts as manifestations of historical injustice requiring compensation, rather than technical challenges requiring loans.

⁶³ Ministry of Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, "Pakistan unveils first climate finance strategy to mobilise funds for national climate action (Revised)," November 14, 2024, <https://mocc.gov.pk/NewsDetail/OTIINzdmOWMtMDA1Ni00Mjk0LWlwYWItODA2MTU2NDkxYjkz>.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

5.4 Finance as the Key to Climate Justice

Sindh's flood recovery financing illustrates the broader patterns in global climate governance, where rhetorical shifts toward the principles of justice often fail to transform into implementation practices. The contradictions between the principles of compensation acknowledged in international forums and the debt-based mechanisms actually implemented, reveal ongoing tensions between the competing approaches to climate finance.

These considerations connect to the recommendations in Chapter 6, highlighting how alternative financing approaches could transform recovery outcomes, when designed to enhance capabilities rather than focusing narrowly on physical infrastructure.

Chapter 6:

Recommendations and Conclusion

The SAHR fact-finding mission's investigation reveals how climate disaster recovery in Sindh reinforces rather than challenges the existing inequalities. This chapter identifies some interventions to change the structures that create climate vulnerability.

6.1 The Climate Injustice Cycle

The findings document a self-reinforcing cycle:

1. Pre-existing inequalities determine impact severity

- Feudal land systems expose landless tenants to greater flood risks
- Women, children, and persons with disabilities face heightened vulnerability
- Economic disparities determine who can prepare for and recover from such disasters

2. Disaster response reinforces these inequalities

- Documentation requirements exclude those without formal land rights
- Bureaucratic procedures favour those with resources and connections
- Political interference directs assistance toward connected communities

3. Recovery programmes deepen vulnerability

- Inadequate housing creates new physical risks
- Debt-based financing creates new financial burdens
- Standardised approaches fail to address diverse community needs

4. Growing vulnerability to future disasters

- Each disaster leaves communities less prepared for the next
- Resources are diverted to debt payments instead of adaptation
- Trust in institutions is eroded, reducing future cooperation

Breaking this cycle requires a move towards addressing the fundamental political problems of power, resources and decision-making authority.

6.2 Responsibilities of Duty Bearers

The mission identified the strategic actions required by governments, international institutions and other stakeholders, to address these rights violations and build climate justice:

The Government of Pakistan must:

- Incorporate human rights standards into disaster management frameworks
- Reform land rights systems to address the vulnerability of landless populations
- Establish a Climate Justice Fund financed through progressive taxation, at global and local level
- Reconceptualise assistance as ‘climate reparations’ - shifting from ‘recovery financing’ to compensation
- Mandate appropriate housing standards with essential facilities, to ensure dignified living
- Implement independent oversight with community representation
- Revise SPHF minimum standards to include essential facilities
- Ensure sufficient space is allocated for average household sizes
- Implement participatory design processes involving respect and care for cultural diversity
- Eliminate discriminatory criteria that exclude self-recovering households
- Develop a comprehensive housing policy incorporating the principles of sustainable climate resilience
- Create alternative documentation systems that are made accessible to landless populations
- Implement special measures for vulnerable groups
- Establish independent oversight for the monitoring of discrimination
- Develop specific protocols for women and children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and minority communities
- Create sustainable funding mechanisms for disaster risk reduction
- Reform disaster legislation to incorporate human rights protections

The Provincial Government of Sindh must:

- Implement land reforms addressing established feudal patterns
- Redesign housing programmes ensuring human dignity and cultural appropriateness
- Develop Sindh-specific climate adaptation strategies
- Establish public monitoring with direct accountability to affected communities

- Create District Climate Resilience Units integrating local knowledge
- Establish transparency mechanisms making recovery information accessible
- Create public oversight committees with decision-making authorities
- Simplify administrative procedures to reduce barriers to participation
- Develop accessible grievance mechanisms with binding remedies

International Financial Institutions must:

- Shift from loans to grants for climate disaster recovery
- Create flexible frameworks accommodating local realities
- Establish accountability mechanisms accessible to affected communities
- Channel resources directly to community-level implementation
- Address power imbalances in programme design and implementation
- Create independent monitoring systems with community representation
- Establish clear lines of responsibility between implementing agencies
- Develop rights-based indicators for measuring recovery outcomes

The Global North must:

- Adequately fund Loss and Damage mechanisms through grants, not loans
- Establish legally enforceable emission reduction requirements
- Develop international standards for rights-based disaster responses
- Support South-South collaboration and the exchange of knowledge
- Create frameworks for climate compensation claims and environment due diligence laws, like the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act and the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.

To break the cycle of climate injustice cycle, it is necessary to focus on the root causes; by democratising land and resources currently concentrated in few hands; centering distressed communities in all decision-making; restructuring financing from debt creation to reparations and by prioritising the most vulnerable in all interventions.

While these changes require significant political will, they represent the only path toward genuine climate resilience. The choices relating to Sindh's recovery that are made now, will determine whether future climate disasters continue to reinforce global inequalities or become opportunities to implement genuine climate justice.

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Annexure: Statement by the Fact-finding Mission



The mission members during the press conference

11 January 2025

SAHR Fact-Finding Mission Exposes Major Flaws in Sindh's 2022 Flood Recovery

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), a regional network of human rights defenders, conducted a fact finding mission from 6-10 January 2025 to investigate the compensation process for persons affected by the 2022 climate-induced floods in the Sindh Province. The mission included Ahmad Rafay Alam, environmental rights lawyer and SAHR Bureau Member, Mohamad Tahseen, Executive Director of South Asia Partnership Pakistan (SAPPK) and former SAHR Bureau Member, Farooq Tariq, General Secretary of the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee and long-standing SAHR member, and Shahnaz Sheedi of SAPPK. The mission was facilitated by SAPPK.

SAHR conducted a fact finding mission in Larkana, Shikarpur, Nawabshah and Hyderabad districts of Sindh to assess the impact of the compensation and rehabilitation

processes conducted after the 2022 climate-induced floods in the province. The mission's objective was to review the actions and omissions of the government's performance in the post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation process as well as document rights violations that have taken place in relation to it.

The mission highlights the following critical concerns:

Inadequate Housing and Infrastructure

The preliminary findings contradict the provincial government's claims of launching one of the world's largest housing projects in history for flood affectees. The mission is concerned that the proposed one-roomed 'flood resilient' housing model, without basic amenities like a kitchen and a toilet, cannot be acceptable as a home. Further, the mission believes the amount of PKR 300,000 initially provided to build this one-roomed house was insufficient at that time despite the government of Sindh maintaining controlled prices on building material, and at present especially with the sky rocketed inflation rates this amount has become unreasonably low.

The mission doubts the capacity of the flood affected beneficiaries to spend their own funds on building a house without being in debt. The cost of material and labor have drastically risen since the floods, as Pakistan witnessed an all-time high inflation that made cost of living unbearable for the poorest of the poor who are the majority of the affectees.

During the observation tour the mission perceived that the affected communities have been deprived of the comprehensive loss and damage facilitation of basic rights and entitlements of clean drinking water, nutritious food, electricity, education and health care.

Sanitation and Health Crisis

The villages where the mission visited did not have proper sanitation or drainage systems. People have holes in the ground in their compounds to dispose all the excrement and waste. These unhygienic conditions have caused diarrhea, malaria and skin diseases to spread in the community.

Climate Vulnerability and State Responsibility

The mission perceives that these one-roomed houses are not climate resilient at all. As climate change related disaster forecasts suggests, more severe natural calamities will impact this vulnerable population in the future and it is highly unlikely that these structures can withstand another heavy rain. While it is the State's responsibility to

provide shelter, food, education, health and a clean environment to people, these fundamental rights of the vulnerable population have been violated and they are forced to live in inhumane and undignified conditions.

The mission has learnt that there is very little consultation in the planning process of designing appropriate houses and in the distribution of houses to the genuinely affected communities. The government's attitude in treating the post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation process as a 'routine public service activity' has diluted the sense of immediacy regarding timely distribution of funds.

Case Study: Village Dhand

In the village Dhand near Moen Jo Daro in Larkana district, 40 houses were destroyed and only four have been built so far. It was informed to the mission that the people have difficulties finding their names on the list of beneficiaries made by the government. Some families still live in tents and some in neighbours' houses. Those who established houses after the floods are not included in the government list. With an average family consisting of 6 people, it is impossible to live in these single rooms, especially when some family members are married.

Access to Healthcare and Other Related Issues

The mission found women and children bearing a disproportionate burden of the flood's aftermath. They are suffering from severe malnutrition, with limited access to proper healthcare due to destroyed road networks. The mission observed children attending schools barefoot and without basic supplies, while many girls have been forced to drop out entirely. The floods destroyed road networks, making it difficult for the population to reach hospitals. No attention has been paid to the mental health of the affectees and in some villages, people have become mentally ill due to the suffering.

Agricultural and Economic Impact

The floods also washed away means of subsistence. Some people used to own small amounts of land and others would work on fields owned by waderas (feudal lords). In some cases, the waderas let these people build houses on their land. Climate change effects have made the land difficult to grow crops on and crop yields have reduced to less than half. In Shikarpur and Nawabshah districts, lands are affected by water-logging and salinity. The government subsidies that were provided earlier are insufficient today due to the inflation and the people are finding it difficult to feed their families.

Climate Change Awareness

Awareness of climate change is almost non-existent among the communities and the people the mission interviewed did not have even the basic idea of climate change and its effects. The affected people believe that disasters happened due to their own faults from a religious perspective.

Systematic Failures

The lack of a systematic and holistic framework of compulsory checks and balances entailing regular monitoring and evaluation of the post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation has paved way to undue delays in rehabilitation and sluggish progress in reconstruction. Political and other reasons have caused fragmentation in the peoples' voice in advocating for expedited post-flood reconstruction and rehabilitation. Recommendations from local activists and organisations committed to advocating for a comprehensive integrated development process for the affected communities appear to be overlooked by the relevant government authorities.

Climate Finance and Economic Burden

The mission notes that though Pakistan's contribution to greenhouse emissions is less than one percent, the burden it bears is unjustifiable and the climate finance mechanism is problematic. Sindh has only received approximately USD 2 billion from the World Bank and other financial institutions mostly through debt financing, which in turn needs to be returned with interest, which will come from poor Pakistanis through unjustifiable taxes and add to their miseries. Already a large population in Pakistan lives below the poverty line and the country's economic situation is poor.

USD40 Billion Flood Bill: No Relief in Sight

The catastrophic floods in Sindh underscore the critical importance of the Loss and Damage fund established at COP27. While the region contributes minimally to global emissions, it bears disproportionate climate impacts, with damages from the 2022 floods estimated at over USD 40 billion. The current financing model, which relies heavily on loans from institutions like the World Bank, forces affected communities to take on additional debt burden for recovery. This creates a cycle of economic vulnerability, as seen in Sindh where flood victims must repay loans with interest through increased taxes, despite already struggling with poverty and inflation. The Loss and Damage fund could provide a more equitable financing mechanism, offering direct support to communities like those in Sindh without adding to their debt burden. However, the fund's current status—with limited contributions from developed nations and unclear

distribution mechanisms—means that immediate relief for regions like Sindh remains inadequate. This gap between climate justice principles and practical implementation continues to leave vulnerable communities bearing both the physical and financial costs of climate disasters.

The mission report detailing these findings and specific recommendations will be released in the coming weeks.

Preliminary Recommendations:

Therefore in this context the Mission calls on the government to:

- review its design of houses and ensure provision of toilets, sanitation and kitchens are included
- review the amount of compensation paid to construct houses in light of present costs of construction
- conduct fresh surveys of affected people to determine whether genuine affectees have been omitted from consideration

In addition, the Mission further recommends:

- Global North countries, responsible for the vast majority of greenhouse gas emissions, should fulfill their promises and commitments of providing climate finance and loss and damage funding to countries bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. Such financing and funding must not be in the form of loans.
- Loss and damage facilities should have robust verification and review processes to ensure funding is received by the people and communities affected by the climate crisis.

On behalf of the mission members,

Rafay Alam
Bureau Member

Mohammed Tahseen
Executive Director,
SAPPK

SAHR is a democratic regional network with a large membership base of people committed to addressing human rights issues at both national and regional levels. SAHR seeks to contribute to the realisation of South Asian people's right to participatory democracy, good governance and justice by strengthening regional response, including regional instruments, monitoring human rights violations, reviewing laws, policies and practices that have an adverse impact on human rights and conducting campaigns and programmes on issues of major concern in the region.

SAHR comprises both institutional and individual members. An elected bureau works as the organisation's executive body while the membership committee oversees enrolment of members. The SAHR Chairperson and Co-Chairperson are Dr Radhika Coomaraswamy of Sri Lanka and Dr Roshmi Goswami of India respectively. The Secretariat is located in Colombo, Sri Lanka.



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