

QUETTA, 31 October 2010 - Thousands of flood victims in Quetta, capital of Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan Province, say they are stranded and unable to get home.

Most of the displaced arrived in mid-August looking for relief aid after floods inundated districts in eastern Balochistan and neighbouring Sindh province. More than two months later, they say they do not have the means to get back.

Inadequate transport arrangements by the provincial governments, combined with the fact that many who left homes in a panic did not carry much cash, are key factors in the slow rate of return. Of the 61,000 displaced who arrived in Balochistan, Pakistan's poorest province, nearly 90 percent are still there, according to the National Disaster Management Authority.

"We had very little cash with us when we fled. Now I have Rs500 [US\$5.88] in my pocket, and it is insufficient to hire any kind of vehicle to get back," Allah Yar, 40, told IRIN. He said he had been doing odd jobs to try and earn money "but it is hard finding work in a strange city."

Allah Yar and his family of five, including a wife who is eight months pregnant, had been trucked the 250km from their home near the town of Dera Murad Jamali, Nasirabad District, Balochistan Province, when the area was evacuated by the authorities.

Stuck

"No one has thought about how we will get back," said Sagheer Ahmed, 30, who needs to travel a little further than Allah Yar to reach his home in Jacobabad District, Sindh Province. "People there are now busy building their homes, but we are still stuck here and have received no compensation - though fortunately there is plenty of food."

He said he was "very eager" to get back home so he could start re-planting his fields.

"We do not want to be stuck here. It is not nice for us women to have no privacy, and to share toilets with so many. It is also very cold here at night," said Amroz Bibi, 50, also from Jacobabad. Temperatures in Quetta have been falling as winter draws in.

The rate of return of the displaced has been better in other provinces. For example in Punjab, "where 3.5 million people had been displaced, all but 10 percent have gone back", said Saleem Rehmat, a spokesman for the International Organization of Migration.

Lt-Col Amer Siddique, Director Operations at the National Disaster Management Authority, told IRIN: "There is no national programme to facilitate returns, but the provincial authorities are making some arrangements for this."

He said 95 percent of displaced people had returned home in Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa Province, 50 percent in Sindh and 10-15 percent in Balochistan. "Water is still present in villages that were flooded in Sindh and Balochistan, so people cannot go back," he added.

Source: [IRIN](#)