

# Pakistan orders mass evacuations ahead of cyclone landfall

June 12 2023, by Ashraf KHAN

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Villagers wait to be evacuated to government relief camps before the arrival of the cyclone, in Sujawal district, Sindh province.

Pakistan authorities on Monday began an evacuation effort to move 80,000 citizens out of the path of an approaching cyclone, which is

expected to bring winds of up to 120 kilometers per hour.

The cyclone is making its way across the Arabian Sea towards the coastlines of Pakistan and India, forecast to make landfall later this week.

Swathes of coastal communities in southern Sindh province are set to suffer [storm surges](#) up to 3.5 meters (12 feet), which could inundate low-lying settlements, as well as up to 30 centimeters of rain.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said an emergency has been declared and the army drafted in to help relocate "more than 80,000 people" at risk.

"We will not request people but demand them to evacuate," Shah told reporters, adding that the order was being issued through social media, mosques and radio stations.

A spokesman for Shah said around 2,000 people have already been evacuated to "safe places" from the area of Shah Bandar, a fishing town nestled among mangrove deltas 45 kilometers (28 miles) west of India's Gujarat state.

However, in the nearby village of Gul Muhammad Uplano, authorities struggled to persuade families to leave.

"We will become helpless in the government camps, that is why we are better off at our own place," said 46-year-old Gul Hasan.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department has warned that traditional mud and straw homes which house the poorest in Pakistan will be vulnerable to disintegration in [high winds](#).

But in the settlement of Haji Ibrahim, a cluster of such structures, fisherman Abu Bakar said concerns over losing their livelihoods prevail.

"Our boat, goats and camels are our assets," the 20-year-old said. "We cannot compromise on their safety."

"But if the danger becomes imminent, we will be forced to leave to save our lives," he conceded.

## 'Adverse effects of climate change'

Provincial lawmaker Muhammad Ali Malkani told AFP a decision had been made to evacuate the population living up to eight kilometers inland.

Karachi—a port city home to around 20 million—is also due to be deluged by dust and thunder storms with winds whipping up to 80 kilometers per hour.

Billboards will be removed and 70 vulnerable buildings evacuated in the city, while construction will be stopped over the entire affected area.

India's Meteorological Department said Monday the storm will hit western Gujarat state around noon on Thursday, with winds gusting up to 150 kilometers per hour causing "total destruction of thatched houses".

Heavy rains and [strong winds](#) late Saturday killed 27 people in northwest Pakistan, including eight children, officials said.

"Undoubtedly, these are the adverse effects of climate change," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Twitter Sunday.

Last summer, Pakistan was hit by massive monsoon rains which put a

third of the country under water, damaged two million homes and killed more than 1,700 people.

Pakistan, the world's fifth most populous country with 220 million inhabitants, is responsible for only 0.8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

But the nation ranks highly among those vulnerable to [extreme weather events](#), which scientists say are becoming more frequent and more severe owing to climate change.

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