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Prime Minister Orders National Disaster Plan as Monsoon Deaths Reach 178

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered a comprehensive national disaster management plan as Pakistan grapples with a devastating monsoon season, with 178 lives lost since late June. The directive, issued during a visit to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), comes amid warnings of worsening floods and urban chaos, particularly in Punjab. This article examines the crisis, its roots in poor

infrastructure and climate vulnerability, and the urgent need for effective action.

The monsoon's wrath has been relentless, claiming 178 lives and injuring nearly 500 across Pakistan, with Punjab bearing the brunt, reporting 103 deaths alone, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). NDMA Chairman Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik told the Prime Minister that this year's rains are 60-70% more intense than last year, driven by climate shifts that amplify South Asia's annual deluge. In Punjab's Chakwal district, a cloudburst dumped 400mm of rain in just 10 hours, triggering flash floods and collapsing homes, as reported by Dawn. Rawalpindi and Islamabad face rising river levels, prompting evacuation alerts for low-lying areas, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) warned.

Pakistan's vulnerability stems from more than just weather. Decades of shoddy urban planning, rampant deforestation, and crumbling infrastructure have turned seasonal rains into deadly disasters. The 2022 floods, which killed over 1,700 and displaced millions, exposed these failures, yet recovery remains sluggish. The NDMA's efforts—rescue operations, relief camps, and the Pak NDMA Disaster Alert App—are stretched thin, with 678 homes and 126 livestock lost this season alone. Malik stressed Pakistan's minimal contribution to global emissions but its ranking among the top ten climate-vulnerable nations, a point echoed by Arab News.

The Prime Minister's call for coordination with provinces is a start, but it's not enough. Bureaucratic red tape and mismanagement often hamstring disaster response, leaving citizens to fend for themselves. Robust investment in flood-resistant infrastructure, stricter building codes, and

reforestation could save lives and livelihoods. As monsoon rains intensify, Pakistan needs decisive, practical solutions—not just plans—to protect its people from nature’s fury and human neglect.