

60 Percent of Pakistan Quake Survivors Still Displaced One Year Later

By Jennifer Riley

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60 Percent of Pakistan Quake Survivors Still Displaced One Year Later With only a few days left before the one-year anniversary of one of the largest earthquakes in Pakistan's history, a new survey released on Thursday found that 60 percent of the survivors are still displaced and vulnerable to the coming winter.

"I want to start my life here again, but there is no work," said Shams Shah Zaman, a quake survivor in the remote village of Khanian to Action by Churches Together (ACT) International in a report on Wednesday. "Soon the snow will begin and our tents are too thin to withstand the winter. How are we supposed to live here? The army doesn't want to let us return to the city, but how can we stay here in the mountains?"

A survey of 621 Pakistan households in the five most-affected districts of the North West Frontier Province was released by the Fritz Institute on Thursday. The survey found that over 90 percent of the population said that they still need assistance with food, shelter, and livelihoods one year after the quake.

On Oct. 8, 2005 at 8:05 a.m. local time, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake hit northern Pakistan killing 79,000 people, leaving 3.3 million people homeless, and completely destroying 470,000 homes.

Two-thirds of the survivors still displaced are living in tents with most located at high altitudes that leave them vulnerable to the upcoming winter.

Church World Service (CWS), a member of ACT, was one of the first groups to arrive at the scene of disaster and recently expressed concern about the coming winter.

"There's only a small window of time before winter hits, and there will be at least 200,000 people without proper shelter. We can't count on this winter being mild like last year. We're faced with a ticking time bomb," said Marvin Pervez, the director of CWS in Pakistan and Afghanistan, in a released statement.

CWS said that with the first anniversary nearing, the organization aims to encourage survivors to become involved in community organization such as details of installing new water systems and other tasks of community life, which it thinks will be the best therapy for survivors.

The Fritz Institute is a non-profit organization with the goal to improve global disaster relief.
