

**The Psychological Toll of Climate Change in Gilgit-Baltistan**

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Dear Sir,

The recent floods in Gilgit-Baltistan are a stark reminder of the devastating impact of climate change on the region's inhabitants. Beyond the physical destruction, it's the psychological toll that's equally alarming. Rising global temperatures are melting glaciers, triggering Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) and flash floods leaving thousands displaced, traumatized, and struggling to cope. The trauma of losing homes, livelihoods and loved ones can have long-lasting effects on mental health, with anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) likely to become widespread, especially among children, women and vulnerable populations.

To address the psychological impacts, a comprehensive approach is necessary. This includes deploying trained counselors and psychologists to provide mental health support services, leveraging community-based initiatives to offer emotional support and conducting research and data collection to understand the psychological impacts and inform effective interventions.

I urge policymakers, national and international communities and organizations like WHO and UNICEF to prioritize mental health by allocating resources for mental health services and support, provide aid and resources to vulnerable communities and address climate change by reducing carbon emissions to mitigate future disasters. By working together, we can address the psychological toll of climate change in Gilgit-Baltistan and support those most affected.

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