

**OCTOBER 21, 2005**

**SCHAKOWSKY RESPONDS TO SOUTH ASIAN EARTHQUAKE**

WASHINGTON, DC - A major earthquake hit South Asia on October 8th. The epicenter was in Pakistan, but its effects were also felt in India and Afghanistan. The death toll was estimated by a senior Pakistani military official on October 19th to have reached 79,000. Representative Schakowsky has taken several steps to help expedite the response to the earthquake and to help South Asians in the 9th Congressional District and across the nation.

Representative Schakowsky signed on as an original co-sponsor of H.R. 4073, the Pakistani Temporary Protected Status Act, which would allow Pakistani nationals currently in the United States to remain for one year.

Additionally, Representative Schakowsky has written two letters to President Bush, (1) to request that Secretary of State Rice include Pakistan in the government's temporary protective status program, and (2) to request that the President make more resources available to expedite relief efforts in South Asia.

Copies of both letters to President Bush are below:

October 19, 2005

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

As Members of Congress who represent a large Pakistani and South Asian population, and in the aftermath of the deadliest earthquake in South Asia in over one hundred years, we are writing to express our deep concern for the wellbeing of Pakistanis currently in the United States. We strongly urge you to immediately add Pakistan to the list of countries designated under the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program and to temporarily suspend deportation proceedings of Pakistanis from the U.S. pursuant to TPS eligibility requirements.

As you know, on Saturday, October 8, 2005, a magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck South Asia. In Pakistan, the death toll could now be more than 54,000; nearly 4 million people are homeless some living in tents or in the open air amid freezing temperatures. According to the United Nations, more than a million people are in need of medical assistance in the quake zone.

We are deeply saddened by the images of the destruction and the countless lives that were lost. Now is not the time to put more lives at risk. The United States should temporarily grant protected status to Pakistani nationals who cannot return home because of this extraordinary natural disaster.

Temporary Protected Status allows immigrants who do not legally qualify as refugees but are fleeing or reluctant to return to potentially dangerous situations to temporarily remain in the United States. The unfortunate and devastating conditions caused by the earthquake in Pakistan make Pakistani nationals eligible for Temporary Protected Status. In the past, our government has granted TPS to nationals of other countries in the aftermath of foreign natural disasters. For example, in October and November of 1998, Hurricane Mitch killed more than 9,000 people in Central America and TPS was granted the next month to over 86,000 Hondurans and Nicaraguans living in the United States at the time. Guatemalans and Salvadorans also had their stays of removal extended for 60 days. Granting TPS to nationals of Pakistan is consistent with the interests of the United States and it is the right thing to do. Of course, homeland security issues - if any - should come first.

As Sergeant Marina Evans, a U.S. military spokeswoman said in Kabul, Afghanistan, "Pakistan is one of our closest allies in the war on terror and we want to help them in this time of crisis."

We have contributed to the relief and recovery effort in Pakistan with supplies, equipment, and money. We urge you to direct the Department of Homeland Security to now contribute to the relief effort with our patience toward Pakistani nationals and grant them TPS. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Rahm Emanuel  
Member of Congress

October 21, 2005

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington D.C., 20500

President Bush:

I am writing to urge that you utilize United States military and civilian resources to provide additional helicopters to Pakistan earthquake relief efforts. This is a dire situation that needs to be addressed immediately. Relief organizations in the affected areas are in desperate need of additional helicopters in order to bring in supplies and evacuate victims.

I understand that there are currently 381 U.S. military personnel and 12 helicopters supporting relief operations in Pakistan. In addition, the Department of Defense has reported that 13 additional helicopters should arrive in Pakistan in the next few days. While I am proud that our nation has already provided this assistance, more can and needs to be done without delay.

Local officials in Pakistani-administered Kashmir estimate that more than 53,000 people have been killed. Our government estimates that an additional 67,000 have been injured and millions are homeless. The Government of Pakistan's near-term needs include assistance with shelter, dry rations, medicine, and water. The highest priority near term needs include winterized tents and blankets for 3 million people. Helicopters are needed to deliver these supplies.

In addition, generous individuals from throughout the Chicagoland area have donated much needed supplies for earthquake relief. The organizations collecting these supplies are having great difficulty transporting these supplies to Pakistan. I hope that you can work with Pakistan's Consulate in Chicago in order to facilitate shipment of these supplies to the region.

I appreciate your immediate attention to this matter. The United States must continue to do as much as possible to aid Pakistan. Time is of the essence because winter is rapidly approaching. I look forward to hearing from you about what more can be done to address this tragic situation.

Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress