



7.1.5. Housing and living conditions

Islamabad was planned as a model city but has seen sprawling unregulated suburban zones since its construction in the 1960's.[2012](#) In the ICT, where planned upscale neighbourhoods coexist with slums ('colonies'),[2013](#) marginalised communities residing in informal and peri-urban settlements were disproportionately exposed to ecological risks[2014](#) such as sudden flash floods.[2015](#) Heat waves challenge those living in improvised or ineffectively ventilated housing structures.[2016](#) Air quality has reportedly deteriorated, affecting inhabitants' health.[2017](#)

According to the Population & Housing Census 2023, 97.4 % of housing units in Islamabad qualified as *pacca* housing units. *Pacca* is a permanent or concrete house, built from durable materials (bricks, cement and steel etc.) with roofs and walls made of cement concrete, burnt bricks, jack board, timber or stone. 1.4 % were categorised as *katcha* housing units, consisting of bamboo, mud, ply wood or card board walls and a cement, iron sheet, gander, T-iron or pre-fabricated roof. [2018](#) About 1.2 % of households were categorised as semi *pacca* - a mix between the durable *pacca* and the less-durable *katcha* construction.[2019](#) The average household size was 5.52 persons living in 2-4 rooms.[2020](#) According to a study on four major slums in Islamabad from 2023, 43 % of residents lived in households of seven or more people. 46.3 % of households had 2 rooms.[2021](#) The Population & Housing Census 2023 showed that 58.7 % of households had access to drinking water within homes. 87.9 % of households had a separate washroom, while 3.7 % of households had no washroom. 99 % of households were equipped with a 'separate' or 'shared' toilet, but 1 % of households had none. The vast majority (96.7 %) of households in Islamabad relied on electricity for lighting.[2022](#) As reported in January 2026, family sizes in Islamabad were decreasing and smaller apartment units were preferred for reasons of affordability and rising cost of living.[2023](#) In downtown areas, the cost of lodging has become increasingly difficult to bear,[2024](#) particularly for the working class.[2025](#)

Most workers in the ICT live in slums[2026](#) (*katchi abadi*[2027](#)) or in low-income apartments.[2028](#) Slums emerge through informal housing markets, in which government officials and informal middlemen are involved.[2029](#) An estimated 24[2030](#) to 50[2031](#) slums are scattered across all parts of Islamabad, characterised by inequality and marginalisation.[2032](#) There, access to basic services, such as clean water, medical care, schooling, and transportation is limited.[2033](#) In November 2025, the CDA ordered the mass eviction of residents residing in the Abadi 'Muslim Colony', ignoring court-issued stay orders.[2034](#)

- [2012](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 1389, 1396

- [2013](#)

Unequal Scenes, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

- [2014](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1396

- [2015](#)

BBC, 'The water had no mercy': Hundreds killed as floods ravage north Pakistan, 18 August 2025, [url](#); Dawn, Four swept away in Islamabad as heavy rain triggers flooding in nullahs, 23 July 2025, [url](#); Geo News, Islamabad, Pindi face urban flooding with over 40 deaths in Punjab amid heavy rains, 17 July 2025, [url](#)

- [2016](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1390

- [2017](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1388; Islamabad Times, Green Yet Growing: Is Islamabad Losing Its Environmental Edge?, 24 June 2025, [url](#); Dawn, Saving Islamabad, 14 January 2026, [url](#)

- [2018](#)

Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., [url](#), p. 81

- [2019](#)

Britannica, Housing of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, [url](#)

- [2020](#)

Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., [url](#), p. 79

- [2021](#)

Mansoor, H. and Iram, A., An Empirical Analysis of Well-being: A Case Study of Slum Area in Islamabad, 2023, [url](#), pp. 768-769

- [2022](#)

Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., [url](#), pp. 86-87, 90

- [2023](#)

APP, Small family unit trend on rise in capital, 13 January 2026, [url](#)

- [2024](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1390

- [2025](#)

Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

- [2026](#)

Anjum, K., Growing Urban Vulnerabilities: Comparative Rural-Urban Food Security Among Pakistan's Casual Wage Workers amid Food Price Hikes, 2025, [url](#), p. 53

- [2027](#)

Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

- [2028](#)

Unequal Scenes, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

- [2029](#)

Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

- [2030](#)

Abdul, L. et al., Urban and climate change resilience: A case of France colony, Islamabad, 14 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1

- [2031](#)

Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, [url](#)

- [2032](#)

Solidar Suisse, Pakistan: supporting children in the slums of Islamabad, n.d., [url](#)

- [2033](#)

Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, [url](#), p. 1989

- [2034](#)

Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, [url](#)