



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, gader, 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](#)

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