

DISPOSSESSION AND DISPLACEMENT



Shared Realities Amongst
Internally Displaced Women in
Afghanistan, Pakistan and India

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WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK
AFGHANISTAN • PAKISTAN • INDIA

WHO IS AN IDP?

For the purposes of these Principles,
internally displaced persons are
persons or groups of persons
who have been forced or obliged to
flee or to leave their homes or
places of habitual residence,
in particular as a result of or in order to
avoid the effects of armed conflict,
situations of generalized violence,
violations of human rights or
natural or human-made disasters,
and who have not crossed an
internationally recognized State border.

— *UN Guiding Principles 1998*

PHOTO CREDITS

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WRN Community Conversations, Assam, India

WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS OVERVIEW

"I don't know much; I am not literate. But we are also human; we have the right to live" (Sunita Murmu, returnee, Pakhriugri village, India).¹

Founded in 2011, the Women's Regional Network (WRN) is "a network of individual women civil society leaders from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India working together to strengthen women's rights and security." WRN is "animated by a vision of women working collaboratively within and across borders, to listen to and learn from each other to construct a common agenda to ensure women's rights, equitable and sustainable development and the full participation of women in building a just peace." While WRN networks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India are autonomous, they work in close collaboration and in cooperation with one another.² The core purpose of WRN is "to amplify the voices of unheard, marginalized women, and together address the interlinked issues of peace and security, justice and governance and growing militarization in South Asia. To this end, WRN connects women peace advocates, committed to working collectively within and across national borders in an open, respectful, learning environment. WRN presents an effective flexible platform for collaborating on research and analysis, joint advocacy and representation, and the implementation of well-designed initiatives. WRN

develops and delivers specific advocacy campaigns to ensure that grassroots women's concerns and their voices directly shape political discourse, policy development and program implementation."³

The words of Ms. Sunita Murmu of Pakhriugri village, in India, in the epigraph come from the second round of WRN organized Community Conversation (CC), which took place in December 2015. The CC model began in 2011, as one of the first activities undertaken by WRN as a mode of discussing security, conflict, and militarization outside elite security policy circles. In describing the CC model, Swarna Rajagopalan, WRN Founding Member and Author of the WRN first Regional Report asks: "How do you bring more women's voices into this discussion? How do we integrate their experiences and concerns into the security discourse?" Swarna Rajagopalan further explains how exploring these questions generated the idea of the CC model, where they would seek women to learn from by their participation in the CCs, and with what objectives: "Brainstorming around these questions generated the idea of Women's Regional Network 'Community Conversations'. We sought out women who live and work in remote and insecure areas to understand their experiences, fears and insecurities, acknowledging their contribution to justice, peace and social reintegration processes and documenting their creativity and agency in adapting their lives to conflict conditions. Women's experiences, their fears, their courage, their priorities and solutions were the focus."⁴

1 'Homeless at Home: Internally Displaced Women in India's North East', WRN, Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma, 2016.

2 This account of WRN's history as a network, its vision as a space of solidarity, and its general goals are taken from a prior publication by WRN. For further elaborations of WRN's core values, please consult this document entitled "From Conflict to Security: A Regional Overview of Community Conversations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India", available at www.womensregionalnetwork.org

3 For more of the core values of WRN, please see: www.womensregionalnetwork.org

4 www.womensregionalnetwork.org



Women IDPs from Waziristan in Bakahel Camp, Khyber Paktunhwa, Pakistan.

Thus the aim of WRN CCs is to bring the voices and concerns of women to the forefront. Ms. Sunita Murmu speaks not only as a woman who has been displaced but as someone who is embedded in larger relations, obligations, and kinship networks — such as her immediate family, as well as wider social networks. Here, she is reminding us of her very right to live. It is stunning that anyone would need to be reminded of that, yet she is articulating what it feels like to be dispossessed and displaced, and in certain logics, disposable. WRN learns from her experiences as a displaced woman in contemporary India. Such interactions and relationships with those affected by forcible displacement, an all too common phenomenon of our world, keep WRN grounded in the voices and experiences of those most affected by such phenomenon — women. CC processes evolved organically in each of the three WRN countries, adapting to different ground realities. At the core, however, a few things remained the same in every country. The objectives of CCs have been to document the impact of militarization, extremism and corruption on the ability of women to access basic services, rights and justice.

WRN also aims to integrate the experiences, concerns, and the very words of women into security discourse and practice.

The 2015 Community Conversations: Forcibly Displaced Women

WRN teams conducted a series of CCs with women in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, for the second time, in December 2015. This second round of CCs had a thematic focus on internal displacement in the region, particularly women. The focus of these particular conversations was to gain an understanding from women themselves of the daily struggles they face as forcibly displaced by conflict and militarization: to understand their experiences, fears and insecurities. The community conversations in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan included women who are newly displaced and those whose ongoing displacements are part of historical struggles, where displacement has become a common aspect of the lives of people for generations. Researchers in each of the three countries selected areas in the country with currently high numbers of internally displaced persons at the nexus of

conflict and displacement. In these areas, a number of the overarching peace and security issues impacting women that the WRN and CCs address such as militarization, security, corruption and extremism, are prominent. The researchers then selected a combination of informal settlements and IDP camps to conduct the community conversations. The Community Conversations with the women who have been displaced as well as interviews with key informants — state bureaucrats, civil society workers, activists and NGO workers — were the main sources of information gathered by the researchers.

This process has generated rich and detailed accounts from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan of the gendered social impact of displacement, but also sharp critiques of politicized violence, militarization, state neglect, and demands for accountability. In these CCs women have revealed with striking clarity the varying levels of impact that displacement has had on their daily survival, (including immediate access to food, much needed medical services); the desperation that displacement produces and the seeming necessity to allow oneself and family members to be exploited in conditions of temporary employment, as well as what living with uncertainty and distrust everyday looks like. This regional report avoids resorting to simple analyses that reify ‘culture’ as the enemy of women, and that attempt to blame the predicaments these women face on local ‘culture’, while remaining uncritical of war and militarization. Instead, this document, through the words of women themselves, remains focused on war, militarization and state neglect.

Why is WRN Focusing on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)?

In the WRN Scoping Study entitled ‘South Asia Tribunal on Women’s Human Rights Militarisation, Conflict and Displacement’, Rita Manchanda, WRN Tribunal Scoping Study Regional Lead and WRN Core Member, explains why WRN is focusing on forcibly displaced persons: “Forcibly displaced persons are the most visible face of civilians in armed conflicts, and not only as one of its consequences but often the major strategy of the parties to the conflict. While environmental disasters and development projects also forcibly displace masses of people, our focus is on armed conflict induced IDPs, although in this sub-region what we encounter is a multiple layering of conflict IDPs rendered vulnerable to environmental disasters and impacted upon by development induced displacement. Questions of control

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ALL STAGES OF THE
DISPLACEMENT CYCLE**

over resources lie at the heart of conflicts, which in turn lead to the forcible displacement of groups of population.”⁵

Rita Manchanda continues by describing the IDP profile in the region: “The profile of IDPs in the sub-region of Afghanistan-Pakistan-India is characterised by recurring cycles of conflicts producing masses in flight, vulnerable to secondary displacement, and subject to protracted displacement.”⁶ While many IDPs live in INGO, NGO and/or state organized camps, a majority actually organize shelter with families and extended social networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The camp structures, especially in Pakistan, are notorious for their lack of sanitation, basic facilities, and remoteness, so many IDPs simply exempt themselves from living in the camps, and opt for living with relatives or in informal settlements, usually at the outskirts of urban centers, to enable job opportunities.⁷

Rita Manchanda explains the critical distinction between IDPs and refugees, particularly with regards to the right to protection by the state, and in doing so, she makes clear why WRN is focusing on forcibly displaced women: “Unlike refugees, IDPs do not lose the protection of their state. It is therefore the state which has the primary responsibility to its own citizens, as a measure of its sovereignty,¹ to provide protection through all stages of the displacement cycle i.e. prevention of displacement and security in flight, humanitarian

5 ‘Scoping Study, South Asia Tribunal on Women’s Human Rights Militarisation, Conflict and Displacement’, Rita Manchanda, May 2016.

6 *ibid.*

7 *ibid.*

assistance and a stable solution that encompasses — *return, local integration or resettlement*. If the state is unable to provide ‘protection’, it is expected to request and accept outside offers of aid. However, if states refuse or deliberately obstruct access and put large numbers at risk, the international community has a right and even a responsibility to assert its concern.”⁸

Who Is an IDP?

The Women’s Regional Network aims to document the impact of militarization, politicized violence, and corruption on the daily lives of women in the conflict-affected areas of India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It aims to support women who have been displaced by conflict and to help them seek accountability and justice. Specifically, WRN along with a multitude of other partners, stakeholders and supporters wants to hold states accountable for their responsibility to prevent displacement and to protect IDPs in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. According to the UN Guiding Principles (1998), IDPs are:

“...persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.”

There has been extensive research that highlights that the vulnerabilities of women (and girls) increase, and are compounded, in the context of war and militarization. This is acknowledged in the UN Guiding Principles, which offers exceptional protection for women who are expectant mothers, mothers with young children and female heads of households.⁹ The Guiding Principles also advocate for the involvement of women “in the planning and management of their relocation.”¹⁰ This is echoed in the UNSC Resolution

1325 on women and peace and security (2000), which “reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.”

While there are measures to protect IDPs — and women IDPs in particular — on an international and/or theoretical level, this is not reflected in the domestic policies of India, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Indian State, for example, does not recognize that there is an IDP problem. This is very evident in the caution exercised by national authorities in their terminology: they categorize IDPs as “migrants” in order to deny the legal category of IDPs as people who are entitled to the same human rights as the rest of the country’s citizens.

Similarly to the Indian government, the government of Pakistan does not formally recognize IDPs, instead opting to refer to them as ‘temporarily displaced persons’. Pakistan still lacks a domestic policy for IDPs and is reluctant to sign on to international legal documents such as the Refugee Convention (1951) or the UN Guiding Principles (1998).

In Afghanistan, while the government adopted a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons in 2013 and a National Action Plan to implement UNSC Resolution 1325 in 2015, the implementation of these policies remain nevertheless weak and IDP related concerns are not considered a high priority in provincial budgeting and planning.

Invisibility of Internally Displaced Women

Afghanistan, India and Pakistan each have distinctive state practices and mechanisms that allow for the invisibility of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Furthermore, invisibility also works in gendered ways so that forcibly displaced women are even more invisible than displaced populations in general. As long as the respective states do not recognize IDPs as a problem, there is no need for any real policy, nor a legal category of IDPs. Furthermore, if there is no formal recognition by states that there are IDPs, then any assistance given to IDPs will be given in the context of welfare, and not in the context of rights. When care is given in the context of welfare it is ad-hoc, arbitrary and even labeled humanitarian, thus the whole question of rights of the displaced can be circumvented entirely. Clearly there is a vested interest of these states to keep IDPs invisible.

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ Principle 4, 2 states that “Certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their condition and to treatment which takes into account their special needs.”

¹⁰ Principle 7, (d) states that “The authorities concerned shall endeavor to involve those affected, particularly women, in the planning and management of their relocation;”



While the findings of each CC process remain context-specific, the words of displaced women in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India demonstrate that there also are remarkable commonalities in the experiences of displacement across the region. While not wanting to conflate the specific histories of each conflict, nor of each woman, the common experience has been that women have disproportionately suffered from militarization, ongoing wars and armed conflicts, and the perpetual displacements that have resulted. This regional report will give visibility to the experiences and voices of women, who have in rather articulate ways, expressed both individual and collective experiences of suffering as a result of war, militarization and the resulting displacements. The CCs are essential to not only allowing WRN to gain understandings of precisely what women and their families have had to endure at every stage of displacement, but are essential in allowing women who have been displaced to become, and remain visible. The CCs are also critical in demonstrating that women know exactly what has created the conditions of possibility for them to be in the predicaments

that they are in — they are not docile, un-informed victims that cannot be consulted or taken seriously. The CCs clearly show the sophisticated political, economic, and other forms of knowledge these women possess, as well as the street smarts that allow these women to continue to endure repeated and multiple violence and displacements. Lived experience in the face of state and non-state violence creates the necessary conditions for women to be responsive and craft lives that are livable, despite the neglect that they indiscriminately, and repeatedly, face.

‘Before’

Without romanticizing the past, or claiming that their lives prior to being displaced were idealized and free of troubles and injustice, the women in the CCs frequently reference their lives ‘before’ being forcibly displaced. Anwara Begum from Hapachara in India informs us of the relatively comfortable lives they had ‘before’, and what they have to face now:

"Before, we had our own shops (selling betel nut, tobacco products, daily essentials). Now whatever work we get is mostly daily wage, construction work, jugali work (unskilled work like carrying away earth) and domestic work, etc." (India CCs Country Report, p. 11)

Similarly, in Kabul while families are grateful that they are now physically safe, as compared to the conflict ridden localities they fled from — the women in the CCs in Kabul explained the very different education and marriage decisions they have had to make for their children as a result of displacement. A woman from Kapisa speaks painfully about marrying off her too young daughters and what others in the camp have also had to do:

"Last week two girls aged eight and ten got engaged. If there was no war in our home, and we were living in our houses, our daughters would be going to school now and we would not have married them of this young."

A widow in her 50s now living in the Nasaji camps also speaks of the job security she and her family had 'before' the war, and the compromises they have now had to make in the education of their children as a result of displacement while simultaneously expressing gratitude for the relative physical safety they have in Kabul:

"Life was good in Tagab (eastern part of Kapisa province, where she hails from) before the war. We were working on our lands and fields, men were selling things and were able to make a living. Our children were going to school. Now we have nothing here in Kabul. Still, we are happy our family is safe here."

In Pakistan, a forcibly displaced woman shared what she characterized as changes in her behavior since she was displaced:

"I don't know why my behavior is changing day by day, now I get angry so quickly as compared to the past."¹¹

Furthermore, one woman in Pakistan explained how something as elemental as dress style has had to change as

a result of her new surroundings. A general rule is that more conservative dress is worn by women in greater frequency when they are amidst strangers, un-related men, and/or altogether unfamiliar environments. Dera Ismael Khan (colloquially referred to as D.I. Khan) is the neighboring city to South Waziristan and thus D.I.K is the city that hosted most of those who were forcibly displaced from South Waziristan. A woman described her dress 'before' with a more restricted dress style as a result of being forcibly displaced:

"On our mountains we did not have restrictions about the veil but here in D.I.Khan, we have to wear the veil all the time."

While much attention has been paid to the restrictions certain interpretations of Islam and or local 'culture' have on women's dress, it may be worthwhile to consider the role that militarization, violence and insecurity play in the choices women make regarding their dress but also marriage and the education of their children.

'After'

While IDPs refer to their times 'before' they were displaced, there is also an 'after' that needs to be taken with equal seriousness. Return and/or re-settlement concerns were expressed repeatedly by the women in all CCs. If the IDPs are to return, they not only need to be assured of their physical security, but all the other ways that security can be imagined, so that their everyday is not a struggle for mere survival.

A displaced woman from FATA clearly states what she thinks is appropriate for her and her family to return:

"We want our lands, we want our businesses, or the government should give us stipends to cover the cost of basic human needs; we need to educate our children but we have no money. When we return, the government should build hospitals in our areas."¹²

A displaced person from Kodakistani in Afghanistan stated more than ambivalence with returning to his home province, even if given land as an incentive, due to the inability to trust that physical security could really be ensured:

11 'Women in Conflict: Voices for Equality, Internally Displaced Women from North and South Waziristan, Pakistan', Rukhshanda Naz, WRN Publication, May 2016. Available at www.womensregionalnetwork.org

12 'Women in Conflict: Voices for Equality, Internally Displaced Women from North and South Waziristan, Pakistan', Rukhshanda Naz, WRN Publication, May 2016. Available at www.womensregionalnetwork.org



IDPs from Helmand living in Kabul

“Even if the government gives me land in Baghlan, where I had no land before, I will not return.”

The woman from FATA and the man from Afghanistan have different imaginations of return, ‘after’, and both need to be understood as the rights that the forcibly displaced have for choosing their next course of action. They should not be forcibly resettled, just as they should never have been forcibly displaced.

WRN is committed to increasing the visibility of IDPs at every stage so that even before they are displaced, their lives are taken seriously, such that every action necessary to prevent displacement altogether must be under-taken. Sufficient warning and assistance should be provided if they have to be displaced, for example, if a military operation or a communal confrontation is imminent. If there is to be a displacement, they must be adequately warned, and assisted from the flight stage to the emergency phase, to the re-settlement and return

phase. Furthermore, if displacement is to be prolonged, lasting years, as in the case of Pakistan and India, the IDPs need to be provided with sanitation, health, and essential education services for children for the entire period of their displacement, and not only initially. Ms. Raheeza Begum of Hapachara in India states how tenuous, ad-hoc, and disruptive prolonged, indefinite displacement can be:

“Some got compensation and some haven’t got any until today. We were again displaced in 1996 from our camp in Patabari. Earlier, doctors used to visit and give us medicines. Now we have had nothing for many years. Our children don’t go to school, we have no money to get our daughters married off. We also have to pay rent to the landlord.”¹³

¹³ ‘Homeless at Home: Internally Displaced Women in India’s North East’, WRN, Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma, May 2016.



Anwara Khatoon displaced in 1996 from Patabari to Hapachara, Assam, India. She has spent 22 years in Hapachara camp waiting for some hope to return to her village. WRN Community Conversations, Assam, India

Resilience

In Deosiri camp in Chirang district in India, Ms. Jyotsna Mardi, 34, an indigenous person belonging to the Santhal tribe, is displaced for the third time.¹⁴ She first fled to this same camp as a child, age 13.¹⁵ In 1998, she fled again to escape the ethnic cleansing.¹⁶ She married in 2004, and in 2014 she was back in Deosiri camp, again, now a widow.¹⁷ Six months into her most recent displacement she has started a shop in the camp, selling bare essentials.¹⁸ Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma ask a critical question in their analysis of her predicament yet also her agency — her ability to make-do in the most exhausting circumstances: ‘resilience or desperation’?¹⁹

This report inhabits the concept of resilience, while at the same time remaining aware and critical of the ways narratives of resilience often obscure and depoliticize the violence enacted upon IDPs by state and non-state actors. By focusing on the ways Ms. Jyotsna Mardi has summoned the strength and energies to start a small shop in the camp, to make a livable enough life, are we taking the gaze off the very violence that has created the conditions of possibility for her to be multiply displaced throughout her young life? Similarly, Ms. Meera Narzary, from the Kaikhongbari camp in India has also endured multiple displacements:

“I have been displaced thrice (1996, 1998, and 2014). Every time we begin life after returning from camp. We again build our house, work the land and the fields again and plant our trees. And then again they burn our houses, our fields, the sal trees, the supari bagaan (betel gardens), which are the mainstay of our lives and livelihood. We have lost our strength now.”

14 ‘Homeless at Home: Internally Displaced Women in India’s North East’, WRN, Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma, May 2016.

15 *ibid.*

16 *ibid.*

17 *ibid.*

18 *ibid.*

19 *ibid.*

Ms. Meera clearly articulates the exhaustion that results from enduring displacement, destruction and the re-building, again, again, and again. Does her resilience, her ability to bounce-back, under any conditions, have a limit? There are no easy answers to these questions posed by the recent narratives of Ms. Jyotsna Mardi and Ms. Meera Narzary. Yet their narratives and those of other displaced women in Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan should allow us to complicate how we think of resilience and victimhood, and what is it that may be inappropriately expected from those we label resilient. In speaking of them as 'resilient' are we just expecting them to bounce-back, again, to be un-marked by the violence, move on, re-build, and be better prepared for the next displacement? We may want them to be and do all of these, but how appropriate is it to ask this of anyone multiple times, without also critically interrogating the violence that subjects someone to multiple cycles of displacement in their life?

WRN is interested in divesting from the victimization rhetoric that is very prevalent when we speak about women at the nexus of war and displacement. One way WRN does this is by understanding resilience also alongside the concept of desperation, and understanding desperation as an ability to endure gendered and sexualized vulnerabilities by engaging in high-risk coping strategies such as early marriage, child labor and/or sex trafficking. It's important, however, to further be cautious about sensationalizing the "risk" factor associated with these strategies, and classifying these practices primarily as "high-risk." It is important to understand that militarization, war, and armed conflict, which resulted in the displacement of people, are "risky" and "high-risk" practices utilized by state and non-state actors. The strategies (early marriage, child labor, and/or sex trafficking) are not the reason that women and children are vulnerable; the vulnerability they are already subjected to as a result of war and militarization is what makes these strategies even an option.

Seeking Accountability and Justice: Women's Regional Tribunal

WRN aims to support women who have been displaced by conflict by convening a women's regional tribunal that seeks accountability and justice. Justice, after all, is a sense of a world still intact, something that makes the dispossessed feel satisfied, that their suffering has been registered, counted for, acknowledged. The WRN tribunal is a process to acknowledge what was done to who by whom, so there is not only an

THE WRN TRIBUNAL IS A PROCESS TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT WAS DONE TO WHO BY WHOM, SO THERE IS NOT ONLY AN ACCOUNT OF, BUT THAT ALL THOSE WHO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE VIOLENCE AND PROFOUND UNCERTAINTIES THAT HAVE COME TO CONSTITUTE THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF WOMEN.

account of, but that all those who bear responsibility are held accountable for the violence and profound uncertainties that have come to constitute the everyday lives of women, but not only women, as a result of living in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Thus the CCs should also be viewed as "part of the preparatory work of consolidating a 'body of evidence' as to build a case of human rights violations" for displaced women in South Asia in a platform such as a South Asia Tribunal. Rita Manchanda, WRN Tribunal Scoping Study Regional Lead and WRN Core Member, describes the proposed regional Tribunal: "[it]will provide a platform for women to publicly testify and demand accountability from state and non-state actors and initiate regional processes towards addressing violations of human rights."²⁰

Themes

This report serves as the regional overview and aims to identify convergences and divergences across the three countries with regards to the mission of the WRN. This report focuses on overlapping but distinct themes that came out from these community conversations with internally displaced women: 1) militarization and everyday life; 2) acute and protracted displacement; 3) discriminatory practices that make people IDPs and ongoing discrimination faced by IDPs; and 4) ad-

²⁰ See 'Scoping Study: South Asia Tribunal on Women's Human Rights: Militarization, Conflict and Displacement' by Rita Manchanda, 2016, available at www.womensregionalnetwork.org

hoc nature of state responses. These four themes appeared in the narratives of women who participated in the community conversations from India, Pakistan to Afghanistan. Organizing the Community Conversations around these themes may help us focus more specifically on what women in these situations are saying about the predicaments they are in, why they believe they are in them, and how we can best assist them without replicating the same processes that created these conditions in the first place.

Displacement as a Global Phenomena

According to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), in 2014 global displacement is the highest ever recorded. The number of forcibly displaced people reached 59.5 million at the end of 2014, the biggest increase in a single year. UNHCR and its global partners, including the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, reported 65.3 million people were displaced as of the end of 2015, compared to the 59.5 million in 2014.²¹ There has been a remarkable exodus of people in 2015 from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan alone.²² UNHCR reports that now 1 in every 113 humans is either a refugee, internally displaced, or seeking asylum.²³ UNHCR also reports that Asia is one of the world's major displacement regions, with the number of displaced increasing to 9 million people in 2014, a 31 percent increase from 2013. The Australian based Global Peace Index explains that the huge increase was not from refugees, but among IDPs whose numbers increased by more than 300 percent between 2004 and 2013.²⁴

Displacement as a Regional Phenomena

New displacement in the Afghanistan, Pakistan and India region increased fourfold from 328,000 in 2013 to more than 1.4 million in 2014.²⁵ New displacements increased overall in the region, but also figures for each individual country — Afghanistan, Pakistan and India — increased. Pakistan accounted for much of the increase in the region's displaced

population, with a 46% increase.²⁶ The military operations by the Pakistani Army in the FATA region were the main cause of the largest new displacements in 2014. In 2013, 140,000 were forcibly displaced, while in 2014, at least 907,000 people were forcibly fled their homes.²⁷ The figures for the number of IDPs in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province from the FATA region is based on counts from UNHCR registers and thus does not capture the full extent of the IDP problem. In all of India, the number of IDPs is 616,140, while in all of Assam (where the CCs took place) there are 113,000 IDPs.²⁸ The number of new IDPs in Assam in 2015 are 346,000, thus the number of new and existing IDPs in Assam total 459,000.²⁹ There are vast discrepancies in the counts and often depending on who is reporting the number, it is either increased or decreased accordingly.

Displacement in the region in 2014 and 2015 was largely a result of inter-communal clashes in India, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan an aggressive attempt by non-state actors to expand their power bases and the international and regional government forces to contain their attempts to expand.

The Community Conversation (CC) Sites

India

In India, the Community Conversations took place in the Northeast in Assam in Bodoland Territorial Administrative District (BTAD). The researchers selected the BTAD areas in Assam precisely because of the contested nature of the region and the current violence and insecurities women in this space continue to face as a result of collusions between state, NGO and non-state actors. After Jammu and Kashmir, Assam has the second largest population of IDPs in all of India, which makes it a critical site for understanding the needs and everyday struggles of women who have been displaced. There are currently 459,000 IDPs in Assam. Researchers from the India WRN team estimate that 346,000 of these are newly displaced persons, since January 2015, a new phase in the ongoing conflict. The BTAD is an ongoing site of identity based struggles for land and power by the Bodos, the largest tribe in Assam. Adivasis and Muslims, the minorities in Assam were most affected by the inter-communal violence.

21 <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/6/5763ace54/1-human-113-affected-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>. Accessed 20 June 2016.

22 <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>, accessed 7 January 2016.

23 <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/6/5763ace54/1-human-113-affected-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html>. Accessed 20 June 2016.

24 http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Global-Peace-Index-Report-2015_0.pdf, accessed 7 January 2016.

25 <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Media/201505-Global-Overview-2015/20150506-global-overview-2015-en.pdf>, accessed 7 January 2016

26 *ibid.*

27 *ibid.*

28 Homeless at Home: Internally Displaced Women in India's North East, WRN, Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma, May 2016.

29 *ibid.*



The Assam Battalion on their patrol: a common scene on the streets; the draconian Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) gives security personnel the right to shoot to kill, with impunity.

The conflict is a protracted one that dates back to the colonial era and the period shortly following independence and has certainly been exacerbated by the location on the border. The Indian State has largely under-estimated or denied that the conflict exists. In addition, the Armed Forces Special Forces Act (AFSPA), a controversial law that dates back to the colonial era, allows the Indian State to declare an area a 'disturbed area', and not be accountable for the violence that it enacts on the populations in the 'disturbed areas'. It allows the security forces of the State unlimited powers to shoot on sight, arrest without warrant, carry out searches without consent, and is exempt from any legal apparatus as a result of any course of action the security forces take. AFSPA is a tool of state oppression and discrimination and it has been disproportionately used in the armed struggle in the North East and Jammu and Kashmir. The deployment of AFSPA law creates a vicious cycle repression and injustice reinforcing the drivers of violent conflict. Many prominent international and national human rights organizations have called for the repeal of AFSPA. To add to the unrest, state development projecting, including hydro-electric dams for power for the

rest of the country have uprooted tens of thousands. Without proper counting of these populations, the extent of the displacement will always underestimate the real problem.

Pakistan

In Pakistan, the community conversations took place in IDP camps in Bannu and Dera Ismael Khan, the two cities in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan that have received the most IDPs from the ongoing global and domestic wars in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan. Researchers from the Pakistan team use government numbers that claim 1.6 million people were displaced from a massive army operation ('Zarb-e-Azb') in the FATA on June 14, 2014. Currently, 109.1K displaced families (with average number of members/family of 6.2) have returned to their homes, nevertheless, 193.0K families are still waiting to return. Thus, using the average 6.2 individuals/family, there are an estimated 1,197,000 million individuals who are currently still displaced in the KP regions of Pakistan. The relationship between the residents of FATA and KP and the Pakistan State has been a tense one since the

origins of Pakistan as a nation in 1947. The Pakistan State still does not grant full citizenship rights to the citizens of these regions and has its own version of the Indian AFSPA, the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR), which also dates back to British colonial law. FCR is applicable to the FATA regions of Pakistan and states that three basic rights are not available to the residents of the FATA region: the right to request a change to a conviction in any court, the right to legal representation and the right to present reasoned evidence. The withholding of these three basic rights to the citizens of the FATA date back to British attempts to quell Pashtun opposition yet in 1947, when Pakistan was created, the Pakistan government added an additional clause that states that residents can be arrested without specifying the crime. Furthermore, FCR allows collective punishment for individual crimes, meaning that entire families can be held responsible for the crimes of an individual family member. International and national legal activists and human rights organizations consistently call for a repeal of FCR, but to date, it is still active.

Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the community conversations took place in IDP camps and informal settlements within the eastern parts of the capital city of Kabul. According to the Afghan researchers, relying on numbers from the UNHCR, there are 1,013,553 million internally displaced Afghans. Afghan researchers cite the Samuel Hall consulting group who have calculated a 50% increase in the number of IDPs in Afghanistan since 2012. The recent Taliban resurgence in the Northern city of Kunduz in 2015 caused 100,000 Afghans to flee the North to Kabul.³⁰ Afghan researchers included both newly displaced persons and those who have been displaced for longer periods of time in the CCs. The draw-down of the International Forces in Afghanistan at the end of 2015 was largely ceremonial as the cycles of war and conflict in Afghanistan are far from over. There were more civilian deaths in Afghanistan in the first half of 2015 than the record high numbers in 2014. Furthermore, in the first six months of 2015, UNAMA documented a 23 per cent increase in women casualties and a 13 per cent increase in children casualties.³¹

Thus although the focus of the community conversations in Afghanistan were with internally displaced women, it is important to keep in mind the larger harms and threats to life that these women, have escaped from.

REGIONAL THEMES AND ANALYSIS

Militarization and Everyday Life

A common theme throughout the CCs was how militarization and violence has impacted women's everyday lives. From the education of their children, to marriage patterns, to pregnancy, to movement and access to markets and health care, to subjective feelings of protection and safety, to hope and aspirations for the future — militarization in the region has changed the ways displaced women and their families now navigate their everyday lives. Women in Afghanistan and Pakistan spoke of how being IDPs have interrupted the education of their children. Young children who were once students are now rag pickers in the streets in Afghanistan. As the researchers for the Afghan community conversations met a mother who shared with them:

"Our kids don't go to school, they work on the street and collect plastic and papers. They have no future, we don't know what danger is awaiting for them on the streets."

In the Indian community conversations one woman equated not having money to educate her children to a form of violence itself:

'We have no money to educate our children give them good food; get them married off, no work, nothing. This is violence for me more than my husband beating me occasionally.'

Women expressed that displacement as a result of war and militarization created the conditions that ultimately compelled them to marry their daughters at an earlier age than they would have wanted. Life choices, not only in terms of marriage partner, but age at marriage become quite limited and structured around a helplessness that comes from being displaced, serially. This is emblematic of the high-risk coping strategies and desperation that women in the region have engaged in to endure the violence and upheaval of displacement. In Afghanistan, Zarmina, a woman from

30 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-kunduz-refugees-in-sight-idUSKCN0S92UC20151015>

31 <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16289&LangID=E#sthash>.



Helmand offered an account of her life thus far, as she laughed, a measure, perhaps of her sense of helplessness, and desperation in the face of serial conflict:

"All I remember is conflict and running to survive, from place to place."³²

Furthermore, pregnancies and childbirths, aspects of everyday life have been greatly and negatively impacted with regards to access not only by the processes of militarization, but also what follows — migration and displacement. Pregnancies and childbirths make women even more vulnerable as IDPs and when they are fleeing violence. Researchers across the region consistently heard harrowing stories from women of in the community conversations of pregnancies and child births, in the camps and while fleeing violence. A woman in the community conversations in Pakistan shared:

"Eight years ago we had continuous blasts and we received papers from the government with warnings to leave this area, helicopters dropped those papers and slips. We walked down the mountains and we spent two days and three nights in coming down. Many children had been delivered on the way, many died and they were buried in destroyed houses."

Another IDP in Pakistan speaks clearly of the multiple spaces and places family members and children have been lost as a result of the violence and displacement, including in their wombs:

"we have not only lost our family members or relatives in drone strikes or military attacks, we also lost children in the wombs."

Researchers in India noted that in camp after camp they heard distress stories of pregnant women fleeing violence. In a camp in Deosiri in 2014, one of the women was 7 months

³² 'Afghanistan's Internally Displaced Women: Complex Realities', Palwasha Hassan, WRN, May 2016.



pregnant and had fled on foot an attack by Bodo militants. She arrived at the camp after running 2 kms and gave birth to the child in the camp. Another woman in Hachapara camp, gave birth in the midst of fleeing violence. The baby was left behind in the chaos as all were trying to save themselves.

Acute and Protracted Displacements

In Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, it became clear to the WRN researchers that each displacement and migration event that women endured was actually part of larger contexts and larger histories of displacement and migration. Often, these women have complicated histories of migrations and displacements — some short-term, some long-term, some may eventually become permanent. When one flees, the uncertainty about ever returning is an anxiety that enters the minds and hearts of IDPs the minute they are confronted with the realities of fleeing, and everyday after. These anxieties about return are coupled with very legitimate questions about security — in all senses of the word. As revealed to researchers on the

Afghanistan team, security is understood as far more expansive than personal security, but includes a woman's sense of honor and comfort with her surroundings, livelihood, imaginations for a future free of violence, free of fear, a sense of justice, and the presence of trust — to name just a few. A single quote from an IDP in India captures not only the sense of anxiety of being an IDP, but also demonstrates that she has been an IDP for some time, and a sense of justice and absence of fear that she understands as what it means to live peacefully.

"We want to return to our village and we should be provided security. This is the second time we have come here. Some of us have been living here since 1996. We want justice. Peace is living with cordial relationship with others so that we can work and live peacefully. Not being in fear always."

A man from Afghanistan, as quoted earlier, articulates the anxieties surrounding lack of livelihood and work opportunities:

"Even if the government gives me land, I will not return. There is no work and no livelihood, and the malik (head) of my village says there will neither be peace soon."

A woman in an IDP camp in Pakistan expresses the frustrations and hopelessness that comes from never knowing if the war is ever going to end in South and North Waziristan. She contextualizes her current displacement with her relationship to war, over 7-8 years:

"Since 7/8 years, the war with the Taliban is ongoing and now there are military operations and fighter places targeting our areas with bombs. We left our homes early in the morning and reached the destination at 4pm.....we did not eat anything, and we did not feel like eating anything."

Even when there are possibilities of return, most families in Pakistan expressed that they are not willing to go back. Many women in the IDP camps expressed that they have now been exposed for prolonged periods of time to both urban settings and relatively peaceful surroundings, and prefer this to the uncertainty of their areas. In addition, in Pakistan a serious deficit in trust was expressed between people and the state. The state promises the IDPs that North and South Waziristan areas are safe now and that the Pakistan state will keep it safe. Yet people expressed that they do not believe the government is at all interested in their well-being and believe that the State is not honest in portraying the current security situation.

Inequality and Discriminatory Practices

India and Pakistan as states have failed to live up to the promise of equal citizenship as guaranteed by their respective constitutions, for all citizens. The partitions of the sub-continent in 1947 and 1971 further exacerbated tensions and created new divisions that serve, until today, as fundamental sources of violence, exclusion, and injustice.

Women participating in the CCs in both Pakistan and India made very clear that discriminatory practices are relevant to the conflicts that caused them to be IDPs as well as in the practices of neglect and care whilst IDPs. Focusing on general similarities between the community conversations in India and Pakistan, it would be fair to say that the Northeast of India and the FATA and KP regions of Pakistan are on the peripheries of their respective states. Since the creation of an

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independent India and independent Pakistan in 1947, there were promises to equally develop all regions of the countries, but the peripheries were severely neglected, and even taken advantage of. Promises for equal development never became a priority for India nor for Pakistan. Furthermore, vast swaths of British colonial policy were adopted, particularly related to tribal populations, making it even easier for the newly founded states to not be committed to equally distributed development and treatment of citizens.

Thus, separatists movements like in Northeast India, need to be seen as attempts at self-determination and self-rule as the state has not served these populations who now have histories of dispossession and injustices, mostly, but not only from the State. What is important to note is that these self-determination movements are primarily organized around identity, they are attempts to gain access to resources which they have been denied historically. Thus organizing around identity politics has created a series of reactions and exclusionary politics as groups try to gain or keep access to land and power for their constituencies only. Discriminatory practices emanate from the State but also create the conditions of possibility for populations to pit themselves against one another to gain or retain access to land and resources, and power. As researchers from India noted in the India CCs report: 'Ironically, the Bodo peoples self-determination struggle, itself a reaction to the exclusionary identity politics of the xenophobic Assam movement, has set off a relentless wave of mirror identity based armed struggles by minority communities contesting the Bodo 'majority' ethnic homeland

Nazma Bewa holds up a photo of her husband Asuruddin Master, who initiated a peace dialogue between villages from different communities and was murdered.



for land and power in co-ethnic space.³³ The researchers from India summarize the ‘multiple and shifting fault-lines of conflict’ as ‘pitting the Bodo insurgents vs state; intra ethnic Bodo factional violence; inter- ethnic violence Bodo vs Assamese, Bodo vs adivasi tribes (‘tea tribes’) and inter communal violence Bodo vs Bengali speaking Muslims.’ Amidst these lines of conflict, the India state response is a fierce and persistently expanding militarization.

Researchers in India have noted the discrimination and neglect of disempowered adivasi (tribes) IDPs as well as the Muslim Bengali speaking IDPs. The discrimination documented towards these IDP populations maps onto the state sponsored neglect and historical discrimination towards adivasis throughout India. With the rise to power of Hindu majoritarian politics has come the revival of public discourse that criminalizes Muslims by referring to them as ‘Bangladeshi migrants’ while threatening their expulsion. Researchers in India also noted that there is a denial of the problem and lesser impetus to protect and provide for the

IDPs as the state is implicated in the displacements in the first place. The state further criminalizes the IDPs by associating them with insurgents, thus altogether avoiding responsibility for their security, rehabilitation and return.

In Pakistan, the relationship of the state to inhabitants of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) can best be described as historical neglect. The IDPs that were included in the Pakistan study articulated neglect and the unequal distribution of resources to their areas compared with other areas of Pakistan by the state. A dual victimization is expressed by IDPs in Pakistan, as manifested in the neglect that created the conditions for them to be displaced, and neglect once they are displaced. As stated in the Pakistan report: ‘Families of target killing or survivors of terrorist attacks are feeling deprived from state support and are victims of state policies’.³⁴ It must be noted that the official numbers in the Pakistan report (193.0K families are still waiting to return of an initial 1.6 million displaced) suggest there are at least half a million more unofficial refugees. These

33 ‘Homeless at Home: Internally Displaced Women in India’s North East’, WRN, Rita Manchanda and Aparajita Sharma, May 2016.

34 ‘Women in Conflict:Voices for Equality, Internally Displaced Women from North and South Waziristan, Pakistan’, WRN, Rukshanda Naz, May 2016.

IDPs are not counted as they are not residing in the poorly administered camps where the research was conducted. They have been absorbed into households throughout KP and living with ordinary Pashtuns and their families who have provided jobs and shelter and forms of care that the state has not provided. Furthermore, the host communities in KP themselves have historically been neglected, and have some of the worse health and education indicators in the country. The IDPs expressed the inadequate health services, even basic services like water, sanitation and electricity were limited to absent altogether in the host communities.

The military attacks by the Pakistan army in FATA have not only changed everyday life for people in FATA, by displacing them, but for those in the neighbouring province, KP, who have incorporated them into their households and their cities. IDPs expressed how they are between the fighting of the state, the Taliban and the foreigners:

“We were in loss in any case. The Taliban were killing us and so were the government and the foreign forces. We have been crushed in between the fight of the Taliban and the government. We had no choice, the Taliban would come to our house and hide there and ask for shelter and food and if we did not help them they would kill us. When they would stay in our place our houses would be shelled by the government and the forces.”

This quote accurately depicts the role of militarization in the everyday lives of Pashtuns in FATA and KP, as well as the knowledge that these women possess of what they are, and have been, up against. The violence has been indiscriminate, whether it was the Pakistan army or the Taliban or the US drones, it was the inhabitants of FATA and KP who have bore the brunt and who pay the price for this militarization.

Ad-Hoc Nature of Responses by States to Displaced Populations

Across the region, women in the CCs articulated the ad-hoc ways in which their respective States attended, or not, to the needs of the displaced. Not only were basic facilities missing but a complete disregard for the special needs of women was expressed across the CCs. This lack of gender specific programming from the States, or if present but not implemented (as in the case of Afghanistan), is a result of the ad-hoc nature altogether of the State responses in the region

to displaced populations. If there is no formal recognition that there is an IDP issue, there can be no systematic policy to adequately respond to IDPs as rightful citizens, and not as charitable or humanitarian subjects. Furthermore, rarely is there any attention to the particular needs of women in the context of protection, assistance and participation in the course of the displacement cycle, whether in flight, in a situation of displacement or during resettlement, despite the full-blown gender rhetoric in guidelines and manuals. Indeed, women are missing not only in the national discourse but also community discourse.

In Pakistan and India, the displaced populations from FATA (Pakistan) and in Assam (India) involved in the Community Conversation were more vulnerable to conflict and displacement because of the persistent and historical disposessions and underdevelopment they have faced at the hands of their States. Thus when the dispossession of these populations at the hands of the State is historical and is actually related to conflicts that caused the displacement in the first place, it is no wonder that the response by the State to the displaced populations is ad-hoc or largely minimal. In Pakistan, since the host communities in KP have multiple connections with the people in FATA through business and family relationships, the ordinary people of KP have absorbed many of the responsibilities of responding to and caring for the IDP populations. These are obligations that should have been undertaken by the Pakistani State. In the waves of violence throughout KP and FATA as a result of massive army operations in Swat in 2009 and 2011 and successive military actions in FATA, the State has been able to plan quite well for the military actions but have left the needs of the millions who have been displaced as a result of the military action largely to the host communities and populations. In Pakistan, women complained of a complete absence of health facilities in the camp locations. Displaced persons had long journeys that resulted in the deaths of their family members and injuries. People arrived to the camps with multiple health issues, including mental health issues yet did not have access to health facilities upon arrival and throughout. Furthermore, even basic infrastructure such as water and electricity. This absence of basic infrastructure in KP in the host communities is related to the historical dispossession and unequal access to development the people in the general population in KP and FATA.

In India, there is no counting or assessments of the needs of the displaced at the national level. When there is no official



data of IDPs, the State response can only be ad-hoc. To further complicate the policy towards the IDPs, India has restricted the involvement of international agencies (UNHCR, FAO) including critical humanitarian agencies (ICRC, Save the Children, OXFAM) for fear that international assistance to the issues of IDPs would violate state sovereignty. Thus fear of intrusive international aid mechanisms combined with the Indian State actively denying that there are no armed conflicts in the areas, only 'disturbed areas', means that the Indian State does not believe that Security Council Resolution 1325, relating to Women in Armed Conflict, is actually applicable at all to India. By referencing sovereignty, the India State violates human rights, prevents international agencies from assisting IDPs in their country and denies protection and services to IDPs.³⁵

In Afghanistan, although the Afghan Government is the only one in the region that has a specific commitment to

IDPs in the form of a National Policy to address the IDPs in its country, the implementation of the policies has been poor, at best. IDPs have the same rights as other citizens of Afghanistan to health services. However in Kabul, and perhaps similar other urban centers, the cost of medical care is prohibitive as there are more private clinics available than government run health facilities. There are limited health clinics near or inside the camp however the services and medicines available have been limited. At the two WRN sites for the CCs, the residents were not aware of any governmental support, except some occasional support during the winter that had no clear link to broader governmental support mechanisms. Although there have been NGOs offering services such as health clinics and some limited education activities, the basic needs identified in the National Policy were not anywhere close to being fulfilled.

The nature of IDP women's experiences across the region are remarkably similar yet there exists a broad spectrum of state responses and international responses. While the Indian government does not want international assistance, the

³⁵ Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1998, 414 pages.

Pakistan government and Afghan governments rely on the international community to address the IDP crises in their respective countries. Thus while the Afghan Government has an official IDP National Policy, the Indian State actively tries to under-estimate or deny altogether the existence of armed conflict. Despite the differences in approaches and actors involved in the IDP assistance, the experiences are surprisingly quite similar. What use is a National Policy for IDPs if the Afghan Government cannot implement it in any consistent and coherent fashion? The IDP experiences in India and Afghanistan thus end up looking similar despite the vastly different approaches by the respective governments.

Notable Regional Differences

While the above three themes allow comparisons to be made and convergences to be seen across the region based on the community conversations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, there are two notable differences in contexts that apply to the region. The first is considerable and finds a convergence in contexts that applies to Afghanistan and Pakistan, but not India. The second is a significant parallel that applies to India and Pakistan, but not Afghanistan.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

In Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, the respective states all are fighting active insurgencies and violent non-state actors. Yet in Afghanistan and Pakistan there is also a commanding and prolonged presence on the ground of foreign forces and drones operating in air-space that needs to be accounted for in the analysis, particularly as related to the displacement of populations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The presence of foreign forces and drone use has had profound consequences for everyday life in both FATA and KP regions of Pakistan and throughout Afghanistan. Foreign forces figure into the constellation of violence that constitute everyday life for people in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Furthermore, the role the United States plays in dictating to the Afghan and Pakistani states what they can and cannot do needs to be accounted for.

One particularly startling example of the pressure put on Pakistan by the United States is related to Operation *Zarb-e-Azb* in June 2014 that caused the 1.6 million people to be displaced from FATA. Unless the Pakistan state undertook Operation *Zarb-e-Azb*, the United States would withhold

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\$900 million of weapons to Pakistan (p. 190).³⁶ Yet following the displacement of 1.6 million people as a result of *Zarb-e-Azb*, the U.S. failed to commit funds to assist Pakistan in the rehabilitation and return of the IDPs^{37,28}, until November 2015 (almost one and a half years after the displacement), when they committed \$30 million.³⁸ In addition to the 1.6 million displaced people, the Taliban attacked the Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2015, killing 140 teachers and students as retaliation for the *Zarb-e-Azb* attack by the Pakistani army, in which the families of the Taliban were targeted and civilians were killed. In essence, operation *Zarb-e-Azb* was demanded by the U.S. in order for Pakistan to receive the \$900 million of weapons to show the Pakistan State was taking serious steps to address terrorism. Subsequently, *Zarb-e-Azb* resulted in the displacement of more than one million people and aerial bombardment of FATA. The ordinary people of KP had to absorb the displaced populations, some into their own homes, and then ordinary children in Peshawar and their families in December 2015 paid the ultimate price for a decision imposed by the United States.

Pakistan and India

India and Pakistan have repressive legislations that give unprecedented powers to the armed forces acting in what the states define as disturbed and restive areas. India has AFSPA, the Pakistan equivalent to this is the FCR. Violence by the

36 <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-113srpt176/pdf/CRPT-113srpt176.pdf>

37 *ibid*.

38 <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/11/04/national/us-announces-30m-for-fata-idps/>



Hasina Begum cooking food in her tent in Hapachara. Her two children were refused admission after she started working in a nearby town.

state is normalized to ensure that society consents to the stringent application of the strategies of counter-terrorism. Security policies against the threat of terrorism have been relegated to the domain of security experts, without factoring in larger social concerns and concerns of the people who are subject to both terrorist and counter-terrorist activities.

In addition to the repressive and retrograde legislations of AFSPA and FCR, India and Pakistan have each come up with a series of terms and terminologies to strip IDPs of their legitimate claims to rights, care and protection, as equal citizens. Often the terms to circumvent referring to the displaced as IDPs are racializing terms: in India, referring to Assamese Muslims of Bengal origin as 'Bangladeshi migrants'; and in Pakistan, referring to the displaced Pashtuns as 'Afghan'. The term 'Bangladeshi migrant' has become a misrepresentation that is both inaccurate, building on xenophobic sentiments, and threatening to the existence of Assamese Muslims of Bengal origin. It becomes even more a dangerous term to be employed when Muslims become targets of mass violence, as the perpetrators get away without

any punishment by labeling the victims as "Bangladeshis". As Bengali speaking Muslims are killed or forcibly displaced, the discourse shifts from one of a targeted violation of human rights to a discourse of illegal immigration. Thus Assamese Muslims of Bengal origin become citizen suspects, and lose any rights they should have as rightful Indian citizens.

Similarly, taking just one example in Pakistan, forcibly displaced Pashtuns who chose to live in a slum in Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, were evicted from the slum in a massive government operation by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in August 2015. The slum had no electricity, and no water supply but became home to many of the forcibly displaced from the military offensives in FATA. The *basti* (slum, in Urdu) was referred to as the *Afghan basti* colloquially- the appellation of 'Afghan' made it easier for bureaucrats, and middle and upper class residents of Islamabad to not see those evicted as Pakistani citizens worthy of rights, including resettlement or compensation, but as 'Afghan'.

Furthermore, not only do such racializing terms normalize violence against Assamese Muslims of Bengal origin in India

and Pashtuns in Pakistan, but these populations are denied any rights that they have as citizens, as they are seen as suspects, not citizens. Furthermore, as they are subject to differential modes of violence, when they become forcibly displaced, they are doubly mis-recognized into a host of other ways India and Pakistan both circumvent the language of IDPs.

In addition to the terms ‘Bangladeshi migrant’ and ‘Afghan’ being mis-recognitions that serve to criminalize and strip rightful citizens in India and Pakistan of their rights as citizens, they are also ultimately de-humanizing appellations, as they serve to perpetuate the idea that ‘Bangladeshi’ and ‘Afghan’, regardless of citizen status, can be treated as less than human.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are obvious recommendations that can be made based on the lack of facilities and overall neglect that IDPs expressed to WRN in the CCs in 2015. Yet the specifics of each of the conflicts demands careful deliberation by any actors who chose to participate in any effort to address the issues faced by IDPs in this region.

There are a few more obvious recommendations that can be made, based on the experiences of women who participated in the CCs about ways their everyday lives can be improved — access to health care, livelihoods, electricity, etc. Yet given that the lives of these people have not figured as important enough to their states, at least clearly in the Indian and Pakistan cases, where the neglect has been historical and consistent — the nature of the recommendations needs to be attentive to this political reality. How do we make lives matter, that never really mattered? This is a question to be answered not only by WRN, but those who stand in solidarity with the dispossessed and marginalized everywhere in the world. How do we make ordinary people of Europe and other wealthier states, embrace the flow of Syrian, Iraqi and Afghan refugees? How do we calculate the costs owed to those refugees and displaced persons whose faces we see for brief moments across our social media outlets? How do we ever repay them for wars that we let be waged in our names onto them? These are lofty questions, but they surely are the questions of our times.

We would not be seeing the record number of forcibly displaced people throughout the world in 2015 if war and militarization were working as effective foreign, or domestic policy. War and militarization are not working, and WRN is

committed to standing with the women and their families whose lives have been immeasurably impacted by decisions made elsewhere. How do we do that in the most earnest and humble ways? How do we stand in solidarity with their struggles but also want to be part of something more to make their everyday lives free of violence, fear, and suspicion?

In addition to the specific country recommendations, found in the appendix, there are manageable recommendations that can be under-taken at the regional level by the WRN, which can make and maintain the visibility of IDPs:

- **Promote critical discussions** around de-weaponization and de-militarization of society in community conversations, community based organizations, and other venues.
- **Monitor militarization** of bilateral and multilateral aid.
- **Affirm women as people** who possess important knowledge and whose experiences need to be taken seriously as they are critical to the crafting of solutions at every level.
- **Create regional standards** that are appropriate to the standards and context of Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.
- **Adoption and recognition** of a formal IDP policy to avoid ad-hocism.
- **Systematic collection of sex-aggregated data** for every flight, at every stage. There needs to be a systematic accounting of how many pregnant women there are, how many female-headed households there are, how many disabled and elderly there are, in order to be fully attendant to the specific needs of women, and special populations (female headed-households, disabled, pregnant women, elderly) and to prioritize these needs.
- There needs to be a **clear shift in language** from the language of welfare to the language of rights with regards to IDPs. By demanding IDP as a legal category to be recognized by each state, the rights of IDPs can be addressed as a matter of policy, not in ad-hoc, random ‘humanitarian’ gestures.
- **Focus on re-settlement** so that the IDPs can return to something, and not to nothing. A focus on re-settlement needs to include collective responsibility by states, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and civil society organizations for re-building infrastructure, and providing adequate and appropriate compensation for individual returnees and returning families.

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I have yet to meet any of the women who participated in the WRN Community Conversations in December 2015, but I do feel as if I know each of them who shared their experiences, struggles, losses and ways of making do in the most impossible of circumstances. I learned much from their words, which sit with me in my everyday life. These women and their families need to be acknowledged at every step for what they teach us about what it means to be living in the face of state neglect and dispossession. By training, I am a socio-cultural anthropologist. The experience working through and with the words of these women in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India have allowed me to explore different ways of making relevant anthropological sensibilities. I thank WRN for this challenging opportunity. Chelsea Soderholm and Rita Manchanda have both provided endless support and a collegial spirit that to me embodies the feminist praxis that many can theoretically support yet often, not be able to actually practice. In the spirit of collective learning and sharing, I have learned much from them as well. Finally, I would like to thank Penelope Kyritsis, my brilliant research assistant and a newly graduated student from Brown University, USA, for her assistance in critical parts of thinking through, and the writing of this document. Penelope's expertise in law, feminist theory and human trafficking helped me to understand the complexities of the lives of the women in these CCs as embedded in larger domestic, regional and international legal regimes. – *Anila Daulatzai*

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Dr. Anila Daulatzai is a socio-cultural anthropologist with active research projects in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Anila has spent over twenty years living and conducting research in Afghanistan and Pakistan. She is currently the Louise Lamphere Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Gender Studies at Brown University. Before that she has taught at Harvard University, the University of Zurich, Kabul University, and the American University of Afghanistan. She has graduate degrees in public health and Islamic studies, and completed her PhD in socio-cultural anthropology in 2013. Her research interests primarily circulate around the themes of war and humanitarianism, as well as the related themes of violence and care. Daulatzai is writing a book based on her ethnographic research with widows and their families in Kabul. It explores everyday life amidst a current war and occupation with a backdrop of prior wars, occupation, and humanitarianism. The book is based on more than four years of anthropological fieldwork conducted between 2003 and 2011 in Kabul, Afghanistan. In her current research projects Daulatzai is exploring the lives of heroin users as intersected with war and militarization, as well as studying polio and global health initiatives, also as related to war and militarization.

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The membership is a dynamic network of women peacemakers from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, inclusive of activists, researchers, academics, students, educators, women entrepreneurs and development practitioners who are joined by supporters outside the network. The Network is currently growing to include significant participation of young women and men.

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