

Press release, 3 September 2021

New TRAFIG publication \ Now more than ever: Afghans in Pakistan need more mobility and durable solutions to stay

With the take-over of the Taliban in mid-August, Afghan peoples' history of forced displacement has entered into a new phase. Currently, up to three million Afghans live in neighbouring Pakistan. [TRAFIG working paper no. 7](#) points out that the current approach of the Pakistani government of 'administering Afghans' keeps them in protracted displacement without the opportunity to integrate legally or sustainably.

The displacement of Afghan people began more than 40 years ago. Many of whom have taken refuge in Pakistan, which hosts 2.3 million documented Afghans who are registered with the government of Pakistan or UNHCR. Close to one million Afghans remain undocumented in Pakistan. **"Afghans' presence in Pakistan needs to be reconsidered by all actors, namely the country of origin, host, and donor countries"**, the authors of [TRAFIG working paper no. 7 "Figurations of Displacement in and beyond Pakistan"](#) underline. Policymakers, NGOs and the donor community need to acknowledge Afghans' contributions to Pakistan's economy, society and culture and work towards securing their right to remain in Pakistan. **"Such an approach is particularly important today given the looming prospect of more Afghans entering Pakistan to escape from living under a government headed by the new regime"**, **Muhammad Mudassar Javed**, Director of the Pakistani NGO SHARP that supports Afghan refugees in the country and co-author of the study, explains.

While aiming to incentivise return, Pakistani government policies hamper the opportunity for Afghans to move around within and beyond Pakistan and remain connected to their translocal and transnational networks. **"Many Afghan refugees have family members who live in other parts of Pakistan or in other countries, but the potential of these networks to lift those in Pakistan out of protracted displacement is limited"**, concludes **Katja Mielke**, researcher at the peace and conflict studies centre BICC and lead author of the study, which is based on empirical research on the experience of Afghan displacement in Pakistan from 2019 until early 2021 as part of the European Union-funded TRAFIG project. **"We also found that social cohesion between Afghan refugees and the Pakistani host society has been decreasing. Local networks are highly significant in day-to-day life but intergroup relations do not yield any emancipatory potential for Afghans"**, **Mielke** points out.

The two-page TRAFIG practice note no. 7 ["Now more than ever: Afghans in Pakistan need more mobility and durable solutions to stay"](#) complements the

working paper. The note pleads for a National Refugee Law in Pakistan or the transformation of Pakistan's current protection system into a generous visa regulation system for Afghans.

You will find TRAFIG working paper no. 7 "Figurations of Displacement in and beyond Pakistan" at:

<https://trafig.eu/output/working-papers/figurations-of-displacement-in-and-beyond-pakistan>

and TRAFIG practice note no. 7 "Now more than ever: Afghans in Pakistan need more mobility and durable solutions to stay" at: <https://trafig.eu/output/practice-notes/practice-note-no-7>

TRAFIG working paper no. 7 was published in the framework of the EU-funded Horizon 2020 research project "Transnational Figurations of Displacement" (TRAFIG) which investigates long-lasting displacement situations at multiple sites in Asia, Africa and Europe and analyses options to improve displaced people's lives. To read more about the EU-funded Horizon 2020 project TRAFIG, click [here](#).

Further information