

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization



Female IDPs and Conflict: Kunduz, September-October 2015

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About MWPS

Monitoring Women's Peace and Security (MWPS) was conceived by APPRO, Cordaid, and Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD) and funded by Cordaid to monitor and assist the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), and Afghanistan's National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, at the local level in 15 provinces throughout Afghanistan. APPRO is responsible for the research component of this project while EPD and Cordaid conduct outreach and advocacy at the national and international levels based on the findings from research at the local level. This paper is the second case study following the rapid assessment conducted in September 2015, available at: <http://appro.org.af/monitoring-women-peace-and-security-a-rapid-assessment/>.

About APPRO

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization with a mandate to promote social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and other less developed countries through conducting social scientific research, monitoring and evaluation, and training and mentoring. APPRO is a non-profit non-government organization, headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan with regional offices in Mazar-e Sharif (north), Herat (west), Kandahar (south), Jalalabad (east), and Bamyán (center). APPRO and its individual researchers have undertaken projects in Central Asia, Pakistan, India, Africa, China, and Turkey. APPRO is also a founding organization of APPRO-Europe (ASBL), registered in Belgium and based in Brussels.

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About Cordaid

Cordaid, based in the Netherlands, has a focus on international development and collaboration in vulnerable regions and areas of conflict. Its mission is to build flourishing communities in fractured societies. Monitoring the transition in Afghanistan is part of Cordaid's program on Women's Leadership for Peace and Security (WLPS). This program aims to increase the capacity of women's networks, give a voice to women at the local level in processes of peace and security, and promote the women's agenda in national and global arenas.

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About EPD

Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization founded to empower women and youth at the community and policy levels in Afghanistan. EPD works to build the capacity of women and youth in order for them to be the front face in presenting their needs in development, peace building and democratic processes of the country. EPD further aims at mass mobilization of women and youth to contribute to overcoming the challenges of instability that Afghanistan is facing. EPD has platforms for women and youth to come together, establish networks, build trust and confidence to transform Afghanistan into a democratic country, free of all forms of violence and discrimination. EPD has peace and security, good governance and human rights as its three strategic areas.

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List of Abbreviations

ALP	Afghan Local Police
ANP	Afghan National Police
ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
DoED	Department of Education
DoPH	Department of Health
DoRR	Department of Refugees and Repatriation
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
FRU	Family Response Unit
IDMC	International Displacement Monitoring Center
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MoED	Ministry of Education
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoRR	Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NAP 1325	Afghanistan's National Action Plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive Summary

This case study was carried out to take stock of the conditions of female IDPs who have fled Kunduz province during the latest conflict in late September and early October of 2015. The assessment is intended for evidence-based advocacy on meeting the objectives of Afghanistan's National Action Plan for implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (NAP 1325).

The findings are based on an examination of the implications of the Kunduz conflict for the four pillars of NAP 1325: Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. Findings from the field indicate that female IDPs participation in peace and politics is practically non-existent. The main reason for lack of participation is the pre-occupation by the women with their day-to-day survival. Also, women and men in IDP camps do not participate in the labor market and face severe unemployment and poverty.

Cases of violence against women among the IDPs in Kunduz were reported, together with concerns that women did not have sufficient access to resources and lacked mobility. In Kabul there were no reports of violence against female IDPs due, in part, to the presence of a police station nearby the camp and the fact that the police paid particular attention to preventing violence against women. When there are cases of violence against women, the preference is to resort to informal justice at a family level. In Kunduz the IDPs complained of corruption as the main factor limiting their access to justice.

Key informants from Ministries of Education, Public Health, Women's Affairs, Refugees and Repatriation as well as the AIHRC stated that women had access to formal judiciary, but no cases of female IDPs seeking help from the formal judiciary could be recollected.

The IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz employed formal and informal means to ensure their security of tenure. In Kabul, the IDPs that faced the risk of eviction sought help from the community elders and on one occasion from the parliament. In Kunduz, some IDPs stated to have either sold property in their home districts to buy land in Kabul or to rely on help from relatives to ensure their security of tenure. There are no special provisions for widowed or disabled female IDPs

Women and girls in IDP camps in Kabul and Kunduz do not have access to education. In Kabul the distance to schools are too far for young girls to cover. Female IDPs' access to health in both provinces is also limited due to the relatively long distances to health centers.

There is no source of continuous, safe and clean water for the IDP camps in Kabul and Kunduz. Residents buy their water from mobile tankers, which are expensive for the IDP families with little or no income. Poverty, especially in Kabul, had limited the IDPs' access to food. Many IDPs rely on the neighboring host communities for food.

Recommendations

Government of Afghanistan

1. Female IDPs' participation in peace and politics needs to be instituted through engaging them in government decision making processes pertaining to IDPs.
2. Displaced women should be provided with dedicated spaces and facilities to mobilize and participate in the political process.
3. Given the high number of IDPs in many provinces, the government should consider setting up a quota system for all governmental organizations to have a minimum number of IDPs as employees.
4. Displaced women should be enlisted within the security forces, especially the Afghan National Police, and deployed in IDP camps.
5. Many IDPs are unemployed but entrepreneurial. Consideration needs to be given to the provision of small loans for many IDPs willing to become street vendors in their new neighborhoods, for example.
6. Female IDPs generally lack awareness about the availability of the formal judiciary. Awareness raising campaigns need to be initiated to increase knowledge of the formal justice system and its potential benefits for female IDPs in times of conflict over domestic issues.
7. Special venues providing legal services to women need to be set up within or in close vicinity of IDP camps to ensure speedy assessment of cases brought forth by women.
8. Special and immediate action needs to be taken by the government to ensure that children in IDP camps have access to education as soon as they arrive. Emergency temporary infrastructure needs to be set up to ensure children's access to education.
9. Set up mobile emergency hospital in IDP camps to ensure that women have continued access to health services.
10. More attention should be paid to the poor sanitary conditions of IDP camps.

Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations

1. Civil society organizations should act as catalysts in creating spaces for female IDPs to become involved in managing affairs relating to the IDP camps and the wider host community.
2. Civil society organizations should consider employing displaced qualified women.
3. Civil society organizations should initiate awareness campaigns to raise awareness on women's rights to fundamental services among the IDPs.
4. Civil society organizations need to take all possible measures to set up literacy centers and schools and recruit qualified teachers from IDP camps to provide education for IDP children, especially girls.

Introduction

One of the key features of ongoing, sporadic conflict in Afghanistan has been the continuous, large-scale displacement of segments of the population within the country. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) Afghanistan has one of the highest numbers of IDPs in the world.¹ As with all crises, women bear the brunt of major hardships as IDPs, requiring special provisions and measures for protection. The loss of livelihoods and having no source of income compounded by domestic responsibilities for food and childcare provision make women susceptible to abuse. Women also face a higher degree of physical insecurity during flight and in places of refuge.²

The “Monitoring Women, Peace and Security” (MWPS) project was designed to contribute to efforts in meeting Afghanistan’s commitments to the UNSCR 1325 with a focus at the community, grass roots level. MWPS intends to capture women’s perceptions and understanding of their conditions and place in peace and security within the framework of Afghanistan’s NAP 1325 at the local / community level. As such, the project works closely with women and women’s organizations at the district level in efforts to prevent violence against women, foster women’s participation in politics and the peace process, protect women from violence, and ensure that specific attention is paid to women’s special needs in relief and recovery efforts.

APPRO is responsible for research and research dissemination components of MWPS, Cordaid provides the lead in adapting and implementing the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Barometer and outreach based on Barometer findings at the international level, and EPD and the Provincial Women’s Networks in the target provinces are responsible for working with local women and women’s rights organizations on advocacy activities at the local and national levels based on the findings from the Barometer and ongoing in-depth research.

This case study was carried out to take stock of the conditions of female IDPs who fled Kunduz during heightened armed conflict between the security forces and insurgents in late September and early October of 2015. This report is intended to provide an evidence base for developing advocacy tools toward meeting the local-level objectives of UNSCR 1325 and Afghanistan’s National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 (NAP 1325).

Methodology

The assessment of the conditions of the Kunduz IDPs was guided by the provisions under the four pillars of UNSCR 1325: Participation, Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery. Assessment of the

¹ IDMC (2015): “Conflict and Violence-Induced Displacement: Global Figures”, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures> (12-21-2015). The data shows Afghanistan to be among the top 10 countries with regards to the number of IDPs. Given the relatively low population of the country, Afghanistan could rank much higher if we were to look at IDPs as a percentage of the population.

² Beyani, C. (1995): “The Needs of Refugee Women: A Human Rights Perspective”, *Gender and Development*, 3 (2), 29-35, DOI: 10.1080/741921812

condition according to each pillar was carried out using the provisions specified under each pillar, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pillars and Indicators of UNSCR 1325

<p>Participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which female IDPs are actively involved in decision-making process • Extent to which female IDPs are involved in peace processes • The extent to which female IDPs' have a say in their <i>wish-to-return</i> right • Extent to which female IDPs are involved -and gender perspective is considered- in the security of the IDP camps • Extent to which female IDPs participate in civil service or labor market <p>Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types and nature of violence that female IDPs are subjected to • Extent to which violation of women's rights are reported, referred and investigated • Extent to which the ANSF address cases of violence against female IDPs • Extent to which violators of women's rights and prosecuted • Extent to which EVAW, the NAP 1325 and Afghanistan's national IDP policy are put implementation <p>Protection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which female IDPs' security of tenure is ensured • Extent to which female IDPs are protected from sexual and gender-based violence through formal justice system • Extent to which Female IDPs are protected from sexual and gender-based violence through informal justice system • Extent to which female victims of conflict and sexual and gender-based violence are provided with alternatives (safehouses etc) • Gender perspective in social / economic planning (reflected in budgets at the district level) <p>Relief and Recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which aid organizations and MoRR have access to capacity and resources to address a gender perspective • The extent of formal provisions provided to female IDPs widowed and disabled as a result of conflict • Extent to which women have access to health and education services • The extent to which female IDPs have access to reproductive health services and family planning centers • The extent to which female IDPs are provided with the right to go-and-see-visits • The extent to which female IDPs' sphere of standards is met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water, sanitation and hygiene - Food and nutrition - Shelter, settlement and non-food items

Primary data were collected through interviews with key informants and focus group discussions with IDPs in Kabul, Balkh province, and Kunduz. Data collection took place during November-December of 2015. In addition, a survey instrument was used to collect quantitative socio-economic data from the IDPs who participated in the focus groups. The findings from the quantitative data are not representative of the whole population and are used only as additional illustrations of the findings from the qualitative analysis. See Appendix 3 for the NAP 1325-based indicators used in this research.

Secondary sources of data included the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its collaborations with the Ministry of Refugees and

Repatriations (MoRR) and the Regional IDP Taskforces throughout Afghanistan, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The next section provides a summary of the formal provisions that ought to be made available to female IDPs in Afghanistan, according to the country's IDP policy and its National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325. That is followed by an overview of available data on IDPs, registered with UNHCR, in all provinces of Afghanistan, where specific attention is paid to the case of Kunduz after the AOG's takeover of the provincial capital. The third section of the report provides the findings from primary primary data. The report ends with a conclusion followed by a set of recommendations for the government of Afghanistan, as well as civil society organization, national and international non-governmental organizations and donors whose work focus on IDPs.

Provisions for Protection of Female IDPs

Commitment to gender equality has been a major feature of post-2001 reconstruction and development programming in Afghanistan. This commitment was first made in the Bonn Agreement (December 2001), followed by similar commitments in the Constitution of Afghanistan (2003), Afghanistan Compact (2006), National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA 2008 – 2018), and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS 2008 – 2013). In addition, Afghanistan is signatory to the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 2003) and has made specific commitments to meet Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) including Goal 3, "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women".

UNSCR 1325, adopted by the United Nations' member states on October 31, 2000, formally acknowledges women's right to participate in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, peacekeeping, and peace building, and to be included in decision making bodies at all levels of government. UNSCR 1325 was followed by six subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), creating a normative policy framework for UN member states to adopt a gender perspective in their peace operations and provide guidance for translating high level recommendations into concrete policies and action plans.³ The need for National or Regional Action Plans (N/RAPs) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 was further elaborated in the UN Security Council statement (2002), UN Secretary General's Report (2004), and UNSCR 1889 (2009), inviting member states to prepare National Action Plans as a step towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325.

Afghanistan's NAP 1325 for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 came into force in June 2015. The document makes specific references to female IDPs as one of the most vulnerable groups in conflicts and calls for the creation of funding mechanisms, economic opportunities, and provisions of relief and recovery services with a focus on women.⁴ NAP 1325 also calls for the implementation of the National IDP Policy as a key step in attending to the many needs of the female victims of conflict.⁵ The IDP policy addresses the short-term and long-term needs of the IDPs for economic and livelihood opportunities

³ For additional details of the resolutions following UNSCR 1325, see APPRO (2016), Security Transition and Women: A Synthesis, available from: <http://appro.org.af/women-in-transition-a-synthesis/>

⁴ Afghanistan's National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 is available from: [http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/English%20NAP%206\(1\).pdf](http://mfa.gov.af/Content/files/English%20NAP%206(1).pdf)

⁵ For the full text of the National IDP Policy, launched in February 2014, see: [http://morr.gov.af/Content/files/National%20IDP%20Policy%20-%20FINAL%20-%20English\(1\).pdf](http://morr.gov.af/Content/files/National%20IDP%20Policy%20-%20FINAL%20-%20English(1).pdf)

ensuring that responses are based on the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Constitution of Afghanistan and International Human Rights Law.⁶

IDPs and Kunduz Conflict

The year 2015 was the most violent year in Afghanistan since late 2001.⁷ The conflict led to large scale displacement with the displaced ranging from infants, around 10 percent, to persons between 18 and 59 years of age at around 20 percent. Almost half of the displaced are females (Table 1).

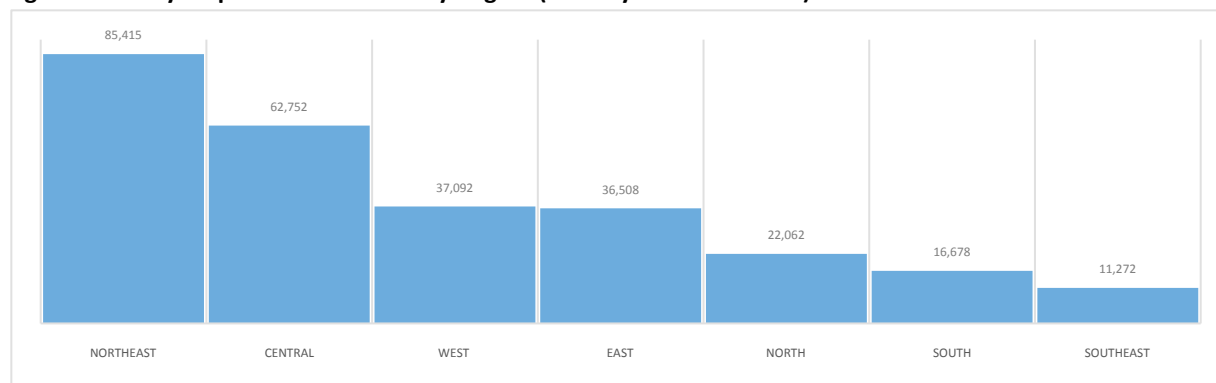
Table 1: Age and Gender Breakdown of IDPs

Age groups	Percentage Male	Percentage Females
0-4 Years	10	9
5-11 Years	11	9
12-17 Years	9	9
18-59 Years	20	18
60+ Years	3	3
Total	52	48

Source: UNHCR/IDP Task Forces data⁸

September and October of 2015 showed a major surge in the number of IDPs from Kunduz, where the conflict intensified and the armed militants took over the provincial capital. UNHCR reported that it had assessed and profiled around 142,000 new IDPs mostly from the conflict in the Northeastern region including Kunduz (Figure 1).⁹

Figure 1: Newly Displaced Individuals by Region (January - October 2015)



Source: UNHCR (2015)

⁶ See Appendix 2 for summaries of the relevant sections of NAP 1325 and the National IDP Policy.

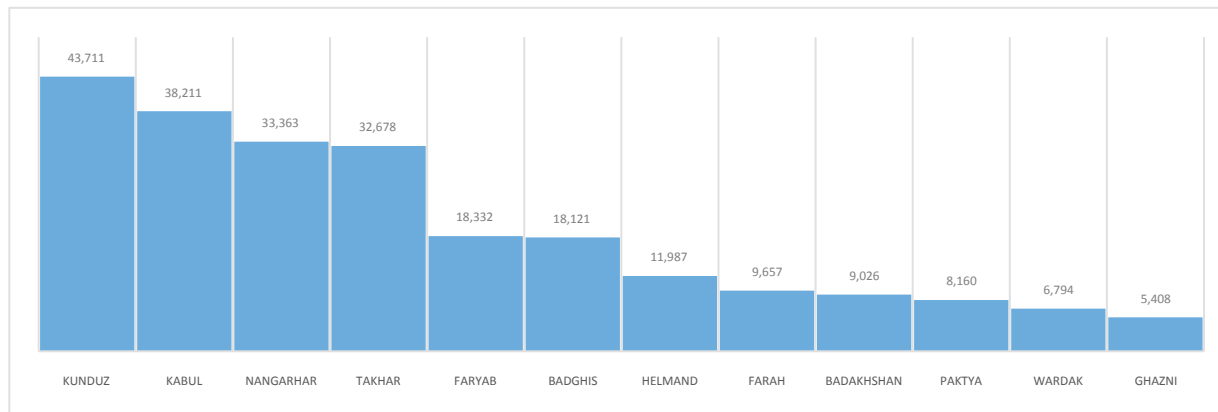
⁷ Malikyar, H. (2015): "Afghanistan's Tough Year, but Optimism Persists", written for Al Jazeera English on December 28th, 2015. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/12/afghanistan-war-year-151227134116412.html> (12-28-2015)

⁸ Data provided by UNHCR Protection Cluster (2015) in Afghanistan and is gathered in collaboration with the Departments of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR) and Regional IDP Task Forces throughout Afghanistan. These data cover the number of IDPs to June 2015.

⁹ UNHCR Protection Cluster Afghanistan (2015): "Update on Main Situation of Conflict-Induced Displacement", presentation published on December 9, 2015.

As of October 2015, UNHCR estimated an increase of 87 percent in the number of newly registered IDPs compared to the same period in 2014. The estimated total number of IDPs for the end of 2015 was placed at 400,000.¹⁰ The real number of displaced individuals is higher as official IDP figures do not include the displaced who are dispersed and live as economic migrants and urban poor. Also, the official IDP figures do not include all IDPs in inaccessible areas.¹¹ Figure 2 shows the number of registered IDPs per province, with Kunduz ranking the highest.¹²

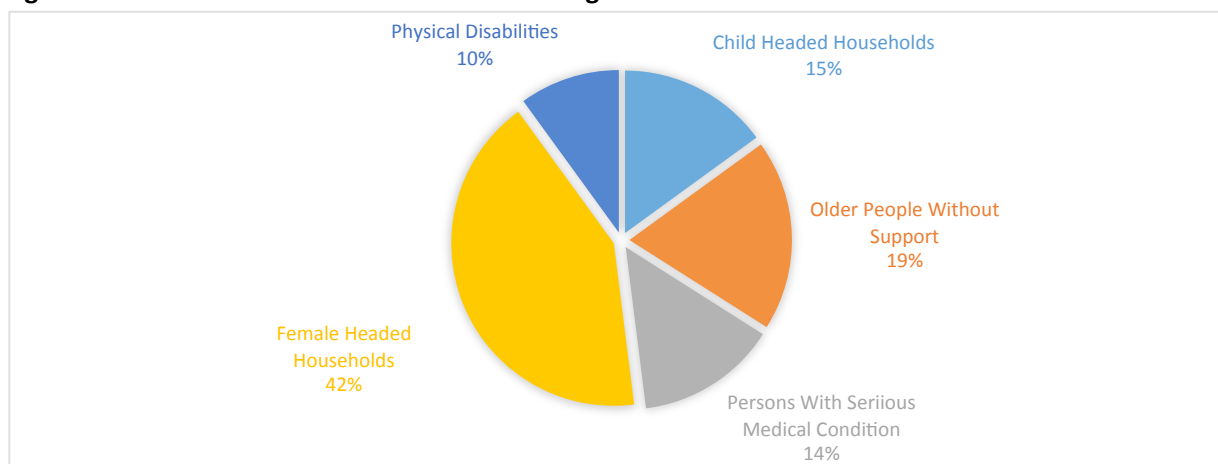
Figure 2: Provinces With More than 5,000 Individuals Displaced in 2015 (January – October 2015)



Source: UNHCR (2015)

A survey by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) immediately after the fall of Kunduz found that a significant number of IDP families could be categorized as vulnerable (Figure 3). Female-headed households, with 42 percent, constitute the highest portion of the vulnerable families. These households are all the more vulnerable given the fact that they have spent their meager savings on transportation to flee the conflict area and the vast majority have no source of income.

Figure 3: Share of Vulnerable Households Among IDPs



Source: IOM Survey Made Available to UNHCR Protection Cluster in Afghanistan

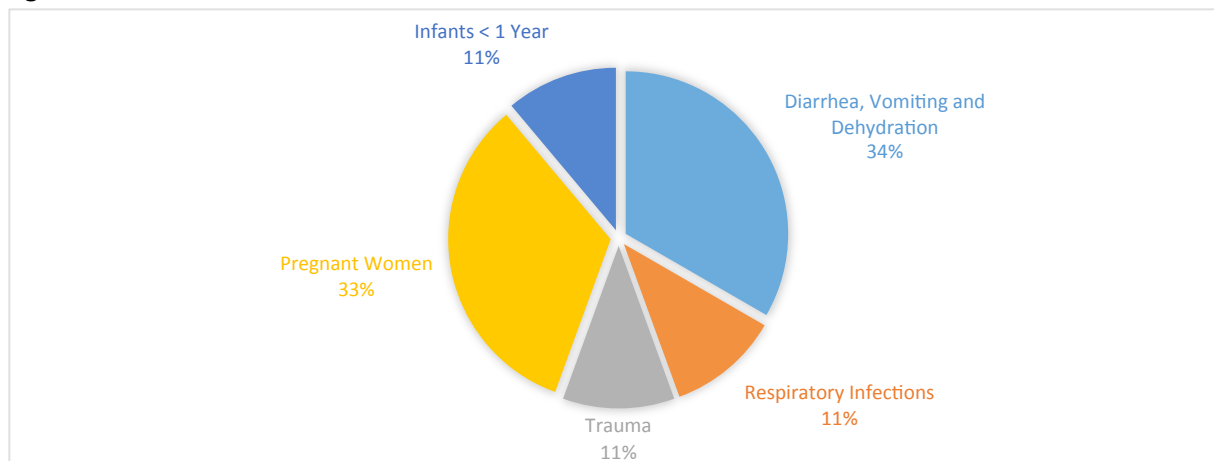
¹⁰ UNHCR Protection Cluster (2015). At the time of writing, this number was almost 272,000 IDPs.

¹¹ IDMC (2015): “Afghanistan IDP Figures Analysis”, available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures> (12-21-2015)

¹² UNHCR (2015)

An estimated nine percent of the IDPs are in urgent need of health care. Among these, 33 percent of the females are pregnant and 11 percent are infants younger than one-year-old (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Share of IDPs in Need of Healthcare



Source: IOM Survey Made Available to UNHCR Protection Cluster in Afghanistan

Six thousand families stated that they had lost their food stock and were running out of financial means to obtain food. There was also a major decline in supply of clean water in Kunduz. The high demand for water led to high prices for drinking water, unaffordable for many IDPs. Access to other services such as education also suffered as a result of the mass displacement.

Key Findings

Participation

There is no evidence of participation by IDP women in the formal peace process.¹³ The role attributed to women’s participation in peace is generally at a family level:

... I am a member of the Peace Council in Kabul and have not seen anyone being actively involved in the peace process on behalf of IDP women from Kunduz. There is one female provincial council member from Kunduz who is trying to be active and speak on behalf of women from Kunduz, but she is the only one and I do not know anyone else.¹⁴

Also:

... The IDPs from Archi district are not involved in peace. This is mainly because of poverty and the specific problems of displacement. However, they are involved in conflict resolution talks at a family level. The women try to settle feuds within their families and want to raise their children to be peaceful.¹⁵

¹³ KI-F-Kab-4, confirmed by three other key informants and two focus groups

¹⁴ FGD-F-Kab-4

¹⁵ FGD-M-Kun-1, similar views confirmed by three focus groups and two other key informants

This lack of participation by women in peace related processes outside the family is attributed mainly to the preoccupation with day-to-day existence, which eliminates the mental space for nurturing the willingness to participate in decision-making above and beyond the household.¹⁶

Female IDPs in Kunduz complained that their men rarely listened to the women's opinions when making family related decisions.¹⁷ In contrast, some of the female IDPs in Kabul have managed to secure jobs as teachers and midwives, or have experience of working as government employees, resulting in more willingness by the women to engage with other people in their professional capacities and influence decision-making beyond their households.¹⁸

The lack of participation in decision making at all levels by the Kunduz female IDPs also means that the women do not have a say in decisions on whether or not to return. Male IDPs in Kunduz stated that they were not against listening to women's opinions but that "because the women are illiterate and lack knowledge and awareness of current affairs, it is best for men to make decisions."¹⁹

In Kabul, a number of female IDPs stated that if the conditions were right, men would listen to their opinions about family matters:

Some men listen to the views of the women and others don't. If men have a source of income and do not face economic challenges they listen to the women. But if they are poor, they are generally too concerned with finding ways to earn an income.²⁰

Adult male and female IDPs are not enlisted by the security forces. There is nevertheless some level of security and balance within the IDP camps in Kunduz because the IDPs know each other and appear to share a common desire for avoiding conflict and strife among themselves.²¹ Female IDPs in Kunduz, however, complain of poor security outside the IDP camp which affects mobility and access to work.²²

The overwhelming majority of the IDPs engaged for this report in Kabul and Kunduz are unemployed. Some of the men work as daily wage laborers, some do street vending, while some women manage to do handcrafts to generate an income. Despite the commitment in the National IDP Policy by the government to provide employment opportunities for all IDPs, the interviewees in Kabul and Kunduz stated that there were no employment opportunities for IDP camps residents.²³

The causes of unemployment in Kunduz are different from those in Kabul. In Kunduz the main causes of unemployment are said to be war and insecurity, with war destroying infrastructure and insecurity discouraging investment in new economic activity.²⁴ In Kabul, IDPs are typically unfamiliar with the urban settings, have a much lower level or no literacy, and lack skills. These impediments are multiplied

¹⁶ FGD-F-Kab-4, confirmed by three other female and two male focus groups

¹⁷ FGD-F-Kun-1, confirmed by two other focus groups

¹⁸ KI-M-Kab-2, similar stories confirmed by two other key informants

¹⁹ FGD-M-Kun-1, lack of participation and men not listening to women is confirmed by two female focus groups in Kunduz

²⁰ FGD-F-Kab-3, similar views confirmed by three other focus groups

²¹ FGD-M-Kun-1, confirmed by two other focus groups

²² FGD-F-Kun-2, confirmed by one other focus group

²³ FGD-F-Kun-2, confirmed by five focus groups in Kabul and Kunduz

²⁴ FGD-F-Kun-1, confirmed by one other focus group

for female IDPs in Kabul and amplified for women by the general conservatism of their communities regarding women in society and working women.²⁵

The Provincial and the District Police Headquarters in Kabul are described as sensitive to the security of the IDP camps and are said to have done a good job in ensuring security in IDP camps.²⁶ However, there are no female police officers.²⁷

Prevention

The female IDPs in Kabul reported that there was no violence against women since “people have too many problems and are busy with their survival [than to assault women].”²⁸ The men confirm this but state, however, that lack of employment opportunities for women is a form of violence against them. For example:

... inside our camp there is no [physical] violence against women by the men. [But] women do not have any rights, they do not have access to education, health, etc. Nor do they have access to employment. All of this is violence. ...²⁹

In Kunduz, the male IDPs claimed that there was no violence against women. The female IDPs contradicted this and reported harassment, physical abuse, forced / underage marriage and *bad*.³⁰ One interviewee stated that her son had murdered someone and, as retribution, they gave up their infant granddaughter.³¹

There is general lack of awareness about what could be done to make a formal complaint about violators of women’s rights, or how such complaints would be treated. Women in Kabul generally expressed confidence that violators could be reported to ANP.³² The provincial level Departments of Women’s Affairs and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs in Kabul are reportedly available to women who wish to make formal complaints about violence against women. There are also reports of the Minister of Women’s Affairs having visited the camps housing Kunduz IDPs to give assurances and inform the women that MoWA is ready to assist them.³³ Similarly, AIHRC states that all their services are available to female IDPs.³⁴

The IDPs in Kunduz complained of corruption as the main deterring factor for women seeking help from the police and the formal judiciary. The general impression among the women is that violators are not brought to justice if they can bribe the police or justice officials.³⁵

²⁵ FGD-F-Kab-3, confirmed by two focus groups

²⁶ FGD-F-Kab-3, confirmed by five focus groups and three key informants

²⁷ FGD-F-Kab-4, confirmed by five focus groups

²⁸ FGD-F-Kab-1, confirmed by five focus groups

²⁹ FGD-M-Kun-1, similar views confirmed by three focus groups and two other key informants

³⁰ “Bad” is the tradition of giving women and girls as retribution to settle tribal or family disputes. FGD-F-Kun-1, confirmed by one more focus group.

³¹ FGD-F-Kun-1

³² FGD-F-Kab-1, confirmed by five focus groups

³³ KI-F-Kab-4

³⁴ KI-F-Kab-7

³⁵ FGD-F-Kun-1, confirmed by one more focus group in Kunduz

Protection

The IDPs in Kabul have been successful in fighting off harassment or evictions by resorting to a mix of traditional and formal measures:

If we face land-related problems, we first go to the community elder and if that does not help, we approach the police and the security departments.³⁶

Or

No one can kick us out. We had an incident in the past where our security of tenure was threatened. Our men went to the Parliament and got assurances that we would not get harassed in that manner again. Now we do not have any issues regarding our right to stay here.³⁷

In Kunduz the IDPs rely mostly on traditional mechanisms to protect their security of tenure:

In this community, women have not faced the problem of forced eviction because some of them are residing in the houses or residences provided to them by their families and others. Some families have sold their land in Dasht-e Archi district and have bought land here. ... we do not face eminent threats of eviction.³⁸

According to the male IDPs in Kabul “there is no sexual or gender-based violence against women in our IDP camp [and,] if such violence does occur, we solve it within the community because we do not want to take our family matters to outsiders.”³⁹ There appears to be a higher likelihood of using the formal judiciary system for gender-based violence in Kunduz than Kabul.⁴⁰

A majority of male and female IDPs in Kabul, and all the IDPs interviewed in Kunduz stated that they felt safe in the vicinity of the police. No instances of harassment by the police were reported and ANP in charge of the IDP camps are believed to be sensitive to the needs of women. In Kabul, the IDP camp is protected by a police checkpoint, staffed by four male ANP officers. Since the installment of the ANP checkpoint, the security in the camp has been good and the police are described as active in doing their rounds to ensure order.

A majority of the women in Kabul and especially in Kunduz state that they have no access to formal justice system. The IDPs in Kabul stated to have never sought help from the formal judiciary. There is general belief, however, that the formal judiciary would be available to provide assistance if needed.

Domestic disputes among the IDPs are generally solved within the families. On occasion the cases are taken to the elders or the heads of the community. In Kabul, the interviewees stated that in instances when the disputes become serious irresolvable through traditional mechanisms, help is sought from the formal judiciary.

³⁶ FGD-F-Kab-1, similar views confirmed by three focus groups

³⁷ FGD-M-Kab-4, similar views confirmed by three focus groups

³⁸ FGD-M-Kun-1, similar views confirmed by two focus groups and two other key informants

³⁹ FGD-M-Kab-2, confirmed by three focus groups

⁴⁰ FGD-M-Kun-1, confirmed by two focus groups

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations in Kabul claims to take into account women's specific needs in providing assistance to IDPs in different provinces.⁴¹ In Kunduz, however, the IDPs claimed that there were no forms of specific aid or assistance for female IDPs. Women-centered assistance for IDPs is only provided by some INGOs in Kunduz.⁴²

Relief and Recovery

Despite the legal requirements, there are no actual provisions for widowed or disabled female IDPs. There is limited access to education for IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz due mainly to long distances between home and school, discouraging parents from sending their children, particularly girls, to school.⁴³ Similarly, female IDPs' access to health in Kabul and Kunduz is very limited.⁴⁴ In both provinces, the distance to health centers is given as the main impediment to access. The added deterrent in Kunduz is insecurity as a major risk to anyone who ventures out of home.

In Kabul, the lack of facilities such as schools, books and other resources are mentioned as the main causes of girls' limited access to education. The IDP camp in Kabul has a single room that serves as a girls' school, having one session of classes per day. There also a lack of teachers within the camp or teachers willing to work in the camp.

Access to health centers and services is especially limited to female IDPs in Kabul due mainly to long distances between the camp and health centers. The IDPs in Kunduz have relatively better physical access to health centers though this access is impeded by the general lack of security and personal safety.

The IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz complained that they had no information about the state of their homes in Kunduz and no news updates from formal sources about whether or not it was safe to return.⁴⁵ The media is said to be the main source of information about the security conditions.

There is scarcity of drinking water, forcing many IDP families to buy their water from private suppliers:

We buy our water from a tanker and pay 15-20 Afghanis for one *bushka* [15-20 liters]. The government or NGOs have not provided us with any other source of clean water. For doing the laundry and the dishes we use the salty water from the well, which is very far away. We do not have water pumps inside the IDP camp.⁴⁶

Reportedly, a well that had been dug for the IDPs in Kunduz by UNHCR was made inaccessible due to the purchase on the land on which the well was located by a wealthy individual.⁴⁷

⁴¹ KI-M-Kab-2

⁴² FGD-M-Kun-1, KI-M-Kab-2, confirmed by two other focus groups

⁴³ FGD-F-Kab-1, confirmed by four focus groups

⁴⁴ FGD-F-Kab-1, confirmed by four focus groups

⁴⁵ FGD-F-Kab-1, confirmed by four focus groups

⁴⁶ KI-M-Kab-2, confirmed by two focus groups

⁴⁷ FGD-M-Kun-1, confirmed by two focus groups

Many IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz are food insecure due mainly to being poor and unable to afford buying food. Some IDPs rely on help from the neighboring host communities.⁴⁸ In Kunduz some IDPs have been able to use the surrounding land for growing vegetables.⁴⁹

Inadequate sanitation in IDP camps is a major problem in both provinces, especially in Kabul. Most of the IDPs in Kabul did not have toilets in the vicinity of their tents. Some use neighbors' houses while others use the open field. In all cases, the sanitation facilities that are available consist primarily of a whole in the ground without a roof, creating risks for groundwater contamination and spread of diseases and dissuading women and girls from using the facilities.

The living spaces in the settlements of the IDPs in Kabul consist of mud walls and roofs made primarily of plastic. Often a small room houses upwards of 15 individuals. Very few IDPs have proper heating. Many are unable to afford wood, sawdust, or coal as heating fuel. In cold winter months, many of the IDPs gather around a metal drum or a small bonfire burning plastic bags and bottles or car tires to keep warm. Most IDP accommodations do not have floor covers and many children suffer from cold and damp related ailments.

The two main differences between the IDPs in Kunduz and Kabul are that in Kunduz, living spaces are larger and there is relatively easier access to food. In both provinces many IDPs are fearful of how they will cope in the winter.⁵⁰

Conclusion

The cumulative effects of continuous conflict on the population of Afghanistan, especially women and children have been a large-scale displacement of the population within Afghanistan. Data shows Afghanistan to be among the countries with the highest number of IDPs in the world caused by continuous sporadic conflict throughout Afghanistan. Since the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001, the year 2015 has been dubbed as the most violent year with a significant increase in the numbers of IDPs that took place in September and October of that year, when the conflict in Kunduz intensified resulting to the AOG taking over the provincial capital. Almost half of all displaced persons are female ranging from infants to persons between 18 and 59 years of age.

This case study has been carried out to take stock of the conditions of female IDPs who have fled Kunduz province during the latest conflict in late September, early October of 2015. The assessment is carried out in order to develop evidence-based advocacy tools to be used in meeting UNSCR 1325, and Afghanistan's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 objectives. It is based on the four proxies (participation, prevention, protection, relief and recovery), which are also the four pillars of UNSCR 1325.

UNSCR 1325, being the prime addresser women, peace and security agenda, calls for special attention to women in times of conflict. The UNSCR 1325 specifically mentions the need for more protection of female IDPs and requires each member state to develop a National Action Plan as a national strategy to

⁴⁸ FGD-F-Kun-4, confirmed by three focus groups

⁴⁹ FGD-M-Kun-1, confirmed by two focus groups

⁵⁰ FGD-M-Kun-1, confirmed by two focus groups

implement the agenda of UNSCR 1325. Afghanistan's National Action Plan has the implementation of its IDP policy as its major action point in dealing with female IDPs.

The IDP policy addresses the short-term and long-term needs of the IDPs for economic and livelihood opportunities ensuring that the response is based on the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the Constitution of Afghanistan and International Human Rights Law.

Findings from the field indicate that female IDPs participation in peace and politics is practically non-existent. The main reason for lack of participation is women being too involved in their day-to-day survival and not having participation in current affairs as a priority. Women and men in IDP camps do not participate in the labor market and face severe unemployment and poverty. The main causes of unemployment are described as lack of opportunities in Kabul and war and insecurity in Kunduz.

Women reported some cases of violence against women among the IDPs in Kunduz. The main types of violence listed were physical and verbal abuse. However, a group of male IDPs in Kunduz stated that women's lack of access to resources and lack of mobility due to insecurity and conservatism is a kind of violence against them.

In Kabul however, women and men stated that there are no cases of violence against women because the living conditions are so dire that men and women have one priority and that is their and their children's survival.

In Kabul, protection to the IDP camp was provided by the police station, which could prevent violence against women. However, despite accessibility of DoWA and legal aid bureaus provided by civil society organizations being mentioned by key informants, the IDPs stated that in cases of violations of women's rights, they generally resort to informal justice at a family level. The conservative nature of their communities does not allow them otherwise. In Kunduz, the IDPs complained of corruption as the main factor limiting their access to justice.

The IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz employed formal and informal means to ensure their security of tenure. In Kabul, the IDPs that faced the risk of eviction sought help from the community elders and in one occasion from the parliament. In Kunduz, some IDPs stated to have either sold property in their home districts to buy the land in Kabul or to rely on help from relatives to ensure their security of tenure.

No instances of sexual violence were reported by the IDPs in Kabul and Kunduz. Key informants from Ministries of Education, Public Health, Women's Affairs, Refugees and Repatriation as well as the AIHRC stated that women do have access to formal judiciary, but no cases of female IDPs seeking help from the formal judiciary could be recollected.

Neither the interviewees in Kabul, nor those in Kunduz stated to have any information about the presence of safehouses for women whose face life threats in the province.

The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation in Kabul stated to take women's specific needs into account when providing aid to IDPs in different provinces. In Kunduz, however, the IDPs stated to not have had women specific aid and help from the government, though some INGOs have attempted to help female IDPs obtain a source of income.

In the two studied provinces, the government or the IDPs mentioned no special provisions for female IDPs who are widowed and disabled. AIHRC stated that the government has not taken its responsibility in this regard and the provisions promised to widows and disabled have not been provided to vulnerable female IDPs.

Women and girls in IDP camps in Kabul and Kunduz do not have access to education. In Kabul the distance to schools are considered to be too much for young girls to cover. Female IDPs' access to health in both provinces is limited because of the relatively long distances to health centers and the IDPs' lack of knowledge of their surroundings.

In both provinces, the IDPs stated to not have been provided with an opportunity to exercise their right to go-and-see-visits. Their sole source of information about the security of their districts and possibility of return are said to be different media sources and informal conversation with other IDPs.

There is no source of continuous, safe and clean water available at the IDP camps in Kabul and Kunduz. Residents stated to buy their water from tankers, which is considered expensive given the extreme poverty.

Poverty, especially in Kabul, had limited the IDPs' access to food significantly. The IDPs rely on the neighboring host communities for food. In Kunduz, due to the vicinity of home districts and some access to land, the IDPs have been able to attain some resources that ensures their access to food.

Observations from the field by the researchers showed the level of sanitation in IDP camps, especially in Kabul, to be very basic and not hygienic. The settlements of the IDPs in Kabul consisted mud walls and a roof made primarily of plastic with 15-20 members of one family residing in a small room. The IDPs did not have heaters and had placed a bucket in the middle of the road in which they burnt plastic, car tires or anything else that they found on the roads in Kabul. Most houses did not have carpets and the floors were cold.

In Kunduz, the IDPs had built their own settlements, which were generally mud houses. They did not face the problem of lack of space as the IDPs as much as the IDPs in Kabul did. However, they did suffer from cold and could not obtain fuel for the winter. There was also much fear among the IDPs in Kunduz from approaching winter.

Recommendations

Government of Afghanistan

11. Female IDPs' participation in peace and politics needs to be instituted through engaging them in government decision making processes pertaining to IDPs.
12. Displaced women should be provided with dedicated spaces and facilities to mobilize and participate in the political process.
13. Given the high number of IDPs in many provinces, the government should consider setting up a quota system for all governmental organizations to have a minimum number of IDPs as employees.
14. Displaced women should be enlisted within the security forces, especially the Afghan National Police, and deployed in IDP camps.

15. Many IDPs are unemployed but entrepreneurial. Consideration needs to be given to the provision of small loans for many IDPs willing to become street vendors in their new neighborhoods, for example.
16. Female IDPs generally lack awareness about the availability of the formal judiciary. Awareness raising campaigns need to be initiated to increase knowledge of the formal justice system and its potential benefits for female IDPs in times of conflict over domestic issues.
17. Special venues providing legal services to women need to be set up within or in close vicinity of IDP camps to ensure speedy assessment of cases brought forth by women.
18. Special and immediate action needs to be taken by the government to ensure that children in IDP camps have access to education as soon as they arrive. Emergency temporary infrastructure needs to be set up to ensure children's access to education.
19. Set up mobile emergency hospital in IDP camps to ensure that women have continued access to health services.
20. More attention should be paid to the poor sanitary conditions of IDP camps.

Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations

5. Civil society organizations should act as catalysts in creating spaces for female IDPs to become involved in managing affairs relating to the IDP camps and the wider host community.
6. Civil society organizations should consider employing displaced qualified women.
7. Civil society organizations should initiate awareness campaigns to raise awareness on women's rights to fundamental services among the IDPs.
8. Civil society organizations need to take all possible measures to set up literacy centers and schools and recruit qualified teachers from IDP camps to provide education for IDP children, especially girls.

Appendix 1: Interviewees and Coding

Kabul

Affiliation	Code
Department of Refugees and Repatriation	KI-M-Kab-1
Department of Education	KI-M-Kab-2
Department of public Health	KI-M-Kab-3
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Organization	KI-F-Kab-1
Department of Women's Affairs	KI-F-Kab-2
Family Response Unit	KI-F-Kab-3
IDPs Male Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-M-Kab-1
IDPs Male Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-M-Kab-2
IDP Female Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-F-Kab-1
IDP Female Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-F-Kab-2
IDP Female Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-F-Kab-3
IDP Female Focus Group – Kabul	FGD-F-Kab-4

Kunduz

Affiliation	Code
Male Focus Group – Kunduz	FGD-M-Kun-1
Female Focus Group – Kunduz	FGD-F-Kun-1
Female Focus Group – Kunduz	FGD-F-Kun-2

Appendix 2: IDP Rights According to NAP 1325 and National IDP Policy

NAP 1325	National IDP Policy
<p>Pillar 4 of Afghanistan’s NAP 1325 calls for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions of relief and recovery services for women affected by conflict, IDPs and women survivors of violence • Increasing rural women’s economic security through increased employment opportunities • Social and economic needs of women are considered in the design, implementation, and evaluation of relief and recovery programs • Girls’ and women’s increased access to education, healthcare services, and employment, particularly for refugees, internally displaced, and returnees • The implementation of IDP Policy provisions related to UNSCR 1325 	<p>Chapter 7 of the National IDP Policy affirms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to protection of life, integrity, liberty and security (articles 23 and 24 of the Constitution of Afghanistan, International Bill of Human Rights and UN Guiding Principles on Displacement) • Right to freedom of movement and residence (Article 39 of the Constitution of Afghanistan, giving every Afghan the right to travel and settle in any part of the country) • Right to adequate housing and access to land (adequate housing refers to the standards set UN’s guiding principles. Together with the right to freedom of movement, this right ensures security of tenure) • Right to livelihood (MoLSAMD is tasked with providing employment opportunities for IDPs who are vulnerable to exploitation because they have lost their livelihoods) • Right to adequate standard of living – Water, Food, Clothes • Right to healthcare (Article 52 of the Constitution of Afghanistan obliges the state to provide free preventive healthcare and medical treatment to all its citizens) • Right to protection of family (Article 54 of the Constitution of Afghanistan acknowledges family as a fundamental unit of the society) • Right to education (Article 43 of the constitution of Afghanistan, making education the right of all citizens of Afghanistan) • Right to property protection and compensation • Right to freedom of expression and access to information (Article 34 of the Constitution of Afghanistan describing freedom of expression and inviolable) • Participatory rights (this includes the right to vote and is according to Article 33 of the Constitution of Afghanistan giving Afghans the right to elect and be elected)

Appendix 3: Indicators for Implementing NAP 1325

Participation: UNSCR 1325 calls for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional, and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police, and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the U.N. Secretary-General.

1. Are women involved in decision-making such as peace, politics and civil service?
2. Do men within the families listen to their women?
3. How is women's security ensured? Do women participate in ANP?
4. Can women work with the ANP?
5. Is the police sensitive to women's issues?

Prevention: Resolution 1325 calls for improving intervention strategies in the prevention of violence against women, including by prosecuting those responsible for violations of international law; strengthening women's rights under national law; and supporting local women's peace initiatives and conflict resolution processes.

1. What kinds of violence are there against women (include harassment of women and young girls in public)?
2. How does the formal judiciary and the police prevent violence against women? Are violators punished?
3. To what extent is the NAP 1325 and EAW law implemented among the IDPs?

Protection: Resolution 1325 calls specifically for the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, including in emergency and humanitarian situations, such as in refugee camps.

1. How are female IDPs protected from arbitrary or forced eviction and harassment?
2. How are women protected from sexual and gender-based violence?
3. Do women have access to formal justice system (if not ask about alternatives)?
4. Do aid programs have special provisions for female IDPs?

Relief and Recovery: The Relief and Recovery Pillar of the Women, Peace and Security agenda focuses on ensuring that relief needs specific to women and girls are met and that special attention is paid to the most vulnerable, including displaced women and girls, survivors of gender based violence, and those with disabilities. It also calls for efforts to support women's activities as agents in relief and recovery efforts, including providing women with equal access to livelihoods activities.

1. How is gender perspective incorporated in help to IDPs (special attention to women when distributing aid)
2. Are there any special provisions for female IDPs who are widows or disabled (does being widowed or disabled by conflict matter?)
3. Do women and girls in IDP camps have access to health and education services?
4. Are there special, women-only health facilities provided to female IDPs (think family planning, gynecological services etc)?

5. In case they wish to return, have female IDPs been provided with the opportunity to do so (include the *right-to-visit*)?
6. What are the female IDPs' sphere of standards?
 - a. Water and sanitation?
 - b. Food and Nutrition?
 - c. Shelter, settlement and non-food items?