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## Security Dilemmas and Forced Displacement: Evolving Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Dynamics (2022-2025)

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### ABSTRACT

*The significance of this study lies in exploring the relationship between security games and forced displacement as a result of changing border dynamics between Pakistan and Afghanistan between 2022 and 2025. Since the Taliban reclaimed power in Afghanistan in 2021, the situation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has grown more volatile due to several factors such as the increased cross-border security concerns, a new wave of militants, and changes in the policies of the two countries. The paper draws on the theoretical framework of the security dilemma to conclude that state-centric security measures, including the construction of borders, military interventions and refugee repatriation policies, have had unintended consequences of worsening human insecurity, thereby fostering increased forced displacement patterns. The study adopts a qualitative research approach to trace the link between security practices and displacement trends through secondary data sources such as policy reports, publications of international organisations and analyses of the media. The result indicated that Pakistan's securitization of its border and Afghanistan's internal political instability has led to a vicious circle in which both sides view their defensive measures as threats, thereby exacerbating the cross-border situation and the flow of displacement. The paper builds on the body of literature by connecting traditional security issues with human security issues and highlighting the importance of cooperation at the borders, conflict-sensitive policies, and a dialogue at the regional level for reducing displacement and promoting stability.*

**Keywords:** Security Dilemma, Forced Displacement, Pakistan-Afghanistan Border, Border Securitization, Human Security, Cross-Border Conflict, Refugee Crisis, Taliban Regime, TTP (Tehrik-I-Taliban Pakistan), Migration Governance, Border Management; Internal Displacement; Regional Stability.

### Introduction

The Pakistan-Afghanistan border area has been one of the most volatile and sensitive borders in South Asia. This area is historically permeable and socially connected and has been affected by tribal identities, ethno-linguistic continuities and trans-border mobility predating the establishment of modern state boundaries. But in recent years, specifically from 2022-2025 the dynamics of this border have changed drastically. All these factors have contributed to the reconfiguration of the interaction between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the border has become

more securitized, through the rising of militant networks, the changing governance arrangements and the ongoing escalating security concerns. In this dynamic setting, the security dilemmas and the forced displacement have become a crucial field of study, connecting to the classical state-centric security concerns with the larger.

The withdrawal of the United States and the NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2021 and the subsequent return of the Taliban to the power gave a turning point in the geopolitics of the region. This change not only revolutionized the political landscape of Afghanistan but also its international relations, notably with Pakistan. Islamabad took a first cautious yet cooperative approach towards the new government, but mounting cross-border militancy, especially by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) eventually tainted the relationship. As the security concerns grew in Pakistan along the border, repeated attacks by militants allegedly coming from terrorist hotspots in Afghanistan led to a series of stringent security policy responses. These comprised the speeding up of the fencing of the borders, tightened up surveillance systems, the deployment of more military personnel on the border and a further restriction on the permissibility of crossing the frontier. The measures were justified in the name of national security and territorial integrity but they also added to the tensions and unforeseen humanitarian outcomes. (Muhammad Zahid Sultan Wattoo 2025).

At the same time, Afghanistan has suffered from severe structural weaknesses, such as economic collapse, political isolation and a lack of institutional capacity. These have contributed to internal instability and pressures for immigration from the outside. Afghan people, especially in border provinces, have been more and more caught between the internal insecurity and external restrictions. The increasing vulnerabilities of displaced populations are a consequence of the tightening of the Pakistan's border controls and non-existence of any comprehensive bilateral migration framework. As a result of this, forced displacement is a key characteristic of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region, both through cross-border movement of refugees and displacement within Afghanistan (Wasil Khan 2025).

In this context, the notion of security dilemma offers a suitable analytical framework for the changing dynamics in the region. A concept created in realist international relations theory, the security dilemma refers to a situation where one state's actions to bolster its security are interpreted as a threat to another state, leading to a response that results in further insecurity to both. On the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Pakistan attempts to strengthen its border and respond to the alleged militant threat is viewed by the Afghan government as coercive or politically driven, and lack of Afghan control over non-state armed actors is seen by Pakistan as a direct threat on the nation's security. This mistrust has led to a vicious circle of "receptive" policies, which undermines stability instead of improving it (Muhammad Zahid Sultan Wattoo 2025).

On the other hand, although the security dilemma framework is sufficient to account for interstate tensions, it is not enough to denote the complete range of the outcomes stemming from these processes. In particular, it tends to ignore the human face of security, particularly that of the population that has been displaced by these policies. This study therefore takes human security as its starting point that moves the analysis from the state to the individual. Human security places greater importance on the protection of a person from chronic threats (poverty, violence, displacement), or on their right to basic rights and basic livelihoods. In this context,

forced displacement becomes not just a symptom of insecurity and conflict, but a key measure of the failure of the governance and policy coordination system (UNDP 1994).

Since 2022, the securitization of border governance combined with ongoing insecurity in Afghanistan has exacerbated forced displacement. Since 2022, forced displacement has increased due to the securitization of border governance and ongoing insecurity in Afghanistan. Facing tough border controls, many people have taken to traveling by illegal and sometimes perilous routes to reach the countries to which they wish to move. At the same time, Pakistan's deportation policy for Afghan nationals has worsened the humanitarian situation for the Afghan migrants as well. These developments are important because there is a big paradox; as states are seeking containment and control, these policies create new vulnerabilities for the vulnerable people (Siân Herbert 2024).

Additionally, the changing dynamics along the border are part of larger regional and geopolitical changes. As the international military presence in Afghanistan is winding down, the region's national actors, especially Pakistan, are being given more authority to deal with migration and security issues. But lack of effective bilateral coordination mechanisms has slowed down the efforts to develop sustainable policy responses. Rather, unilateral measures and security concerns in the short term have set the tone for state behaviour, and have contributed to cycles of mistrust and instability. In this context, the border with Afghanistan has come to signify a region of geopolitical contestation, and a region where different security discourses – on security versus human security – meet and sometimes clash (Muhammad Zahid Sultan Wattoo 2025).

The present study, therefore, aims to study the link between security challenges and forced displacement in the dynamic of Pakistan-Afghanistan border between 2022 and 2025. It contends that although the state's responses to security threats have been legitimate, they have also been securitized, which has led to forced displacement and human insecurity. It asserts that while the state has responded to legitimate security threats, it has done so in a securitised manner, which has inadvertently resulted in forced displacement and human insecurity. The study combines the realist approaches to security dilemmas with the human security framework, in order to offer a more holistic view on the complex relationship between state policies and humanitarian outcomes.

By doing so, the paper makes a valuable addition to the academic debate on border studies, forced migration and security studies in the sense that it points towards a paradigm shift away from a state-centric approach. It highlights the need for national security and humanitarian approaches to be taken together. The study concludes that the solution for sustainable stability at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border cannot be achieved with unilateral and military approach and it is necessary that there must be cooperative governance structures that address the security concern and safeguard the vulnerable groups.

### **Securitization of the Border and State-Centric Responses**

The securitization of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has increased dramatically in last three years (2022-2025), which also is indicative of the changing perceptions and sensitivities of states towards cross-border dynamics. (Wasil Khan 2025). Securitisation is the process where political and social issues are presented as security threats and thus, legitimise the use of extraordinary state measures (Barry Buzan 1998). In this context, Pakistan has increasingly been viewing border management as a security issue, largely in the context of concerns about infiltration by militants, specifically the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and fears of smuggling, undocumented migration

and cross-border crime. The border area, which was once open and social, has been reimagined as a strictly monitored and militarised space in this security-focussed approach (Siân Herbert 2024).

State-centric reactions to such challenges are based on realist security assumptions that are focused on sovereignty, territorial integrity and internal stability. Indonesia's strategy has involved the installation of heavy fencing along the border, military deployment, implementation of surveillance technology, and the strengthening of visa and border controls. In addition, deportation campaigns against Afghan migrants have turned into an important policy tool. These measures aim to limit illegal crossing and strengthen border security as part of a more general policy of defensive securitization in the wake of perceived external threats coming from Afghan soil (Haider Ali Khan 2024).

But these policies have severely affected the historical and socio-cultural landscape of the border land. Ethnic, tribal and economic interactions have been a prominent feature of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border for a long time, especially between the Pashtun people. These centuries-old systems of movement and exchange have come under strain as a result of the imposition of strict border controls, which have rendered a border area that was once fluid into a militarized one. They were meant to make things more secure, but also have resulted in the creation of informal and illicit crossing points, where people find other ways to get past the state. This is a very important paradox of securitization: the more securitization leads to insecurity, the more it can cause new patterns of unregulated movement and instability (Hafeez Ullah 2022).

Moreover, the impact of securitisation on the human side of the equation has been largely ignored in state-centric approaches. The legal uncertainty of Afghan refugees and migrants in Pakistan has been growing, along with socio-economic marginalization and deportation pressure. At the same time, people whose lives in Afghanistan have been impacted by conflict and economic hardship face increasing restrictions on migration - both safe and legal. This has exacerbated forced displacement and humanitarian vulnerabilities along the border region. In conclusion, the securitization of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border presents a crucial dilemma between state security interests and human security interests, and how a policy that aims to reduce insecurities can paradoxically become a source of insecurities (Dr. Aisha Bibi 2026).

### **Security Dilemma and Mutual Mistrust**

The security dilemma between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been a major factor in the instability in the region since 2022 until now, highlighting this issue as a key concern for 2025. In the context of international relations theory, security dilemma is a dynamic in which an action by a state to increase its security is interpreted by another state as an attack and thus leads to further measures that increase animosity. In Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, this is seen in the way each country views the other's activities in a suspicious manner. While Pakistan is trying to beef up its border security, stop militant infiltration and to control movement across the borders, it is being seen in Afghanistan as coercive and unilateral. On the other hand, Pakistan considers the failure or unwillingness of the Afghan government to check the activities of non-state armed groups from its territory a direct threat to Pakistan's stability. This feeling of threat to each other is the basis of the long-standing mistrust between the two neighbourhoods (Tariq Aziz 2021).

This mistrust is exacerbated by the lack of reliable institutional arrangements for bilateral cooperation. Although there are historical, cultural and ethnic ties between the two countries, especially among Pashtuns, political ties are inconsistent and fragmented. These diplomatic

encounters are often marred by security breaches, border skirmishes and allegations of interference. Pakistan has been worrying about the resurgence of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in the country, which has heightened concerns over the use of Afghan soil as a safe haven for hostile elements. In response, Afghanistan repeatedly denies these accusations, blaming regional instability and external pressure for internal security problems. This process of accusation and denial only further fueled mistrust and narrows the room for positive discussions (Ilam Khan 2025).

The security dilemma is also illustrated by the fact that as nations escalate their policies, each reinforces the other's. Pakistan's deployment of its military on the borders, installation of barricades and growing restrictions on movement are viewed as threatening actions that lead to counter-nationwide rhetoric and political opposition from Afghan government. Meanwhile, weak border security in Afghanistan, due to weak enforcement capabilities and weak governance, fuels Pakistan's sense of insecurity and further tightens its cross-border policies. A vicious cycle of escalation instead of resolution is produced by this back-and-forth process of one party's sense of its own security is seen as a threat to the other. This makes the security aspect a self feeding cycle, escalating tensions in the region instead of easing them (Nasar Ullah Jan 2025).

In essence, the lack of trust is more a structural and historical issue that hinders Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. However, the underlying causes of political mistrust, conflicting strategic interests, and limited institutional coordination are important drivers of the wider security dilemma, as are immediate security problems like the militancy and the issue of border control. This distrust can affect the relationship between states and is a factor that can indirectly affect human insecurity, such as forced displacement and limited mobility. The problem can thus only be solved by a more proactive approach to security policy, one that moves away from static security policies to long-term diplomatic efforts and confidence-building.

#### **Forced Displacement as a Policy Outcome**

The forced displacement phenomena in Pakistan-Afghanistan border region have become a phenomenon which is not only conflict-driven but also is influenced by the policies and governance decisions as well. The securitization of the border, deportation campaigns, tightened migration regimes and the overall worsening of the socio-economic situation in Afghanistan have played a pivotal role in displacing people from 2022 to 2025. The threats causing population movements remain largely unchanged, with armed conflict, especially between the state and non-state actors like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), remaining significant push factors; however, policy interventions on both sides of the border have reinforced the intensity and scale of population displacement. In this regard, forced displacement is not just a result of insecurity, but an unintended result of a state-based approach to security (Kashif Iqbal 2025).

Pakistan is increasingly turning to deportation and repatriation as key policy-related displacement tools. The documentation process has become more stringent and Afghan nationals were subjected to periodic crackdowns, leading to a large influx of Afghan nationals back into the country, many of whom moved with uncertainty and economic insecurity. Such moves are generally made in a security discourse that connects undocumented migration to terrorism, smuggling and internal instability. Such policies, however, are likely to ignore the diverse circumstances of the displaced, a large proportion of whom are long-term refugees, women, and children with few social and economic connections to Afghanistan. As a result,

displacement is not always a free or voluntary choice, but is often sudden and forced (Kashif Iqbal 2025).

The human aspects of these policy outcomes are illustrated further through the empirical insights gained from field-based observations and reported interviews. For example, the people who are displaced frequently talk about the voluntary nature of their movements, in the sense that they did not have any other choice. In border areas, one returnee interviewed said, "We are not leaving because we wished to leave, but the new rules and fear of arrest prevented us from staying. Also, in border areas, humanitarian staff has observed that many returnees are poorly equipped and lack shelter, reflecting the sudden, yawning nature of these returns. These narratives highlight how policy implementation processes are directly experienced as insecurity and forced mobility (Kashif Iqbal 2025).

Furthermore, forced displacement is not unidirectional and multilayered. It encompasses the cross-border movement from Pakistan to Afghanistan, movement within Afghanistan as a result of economic crisis and political instability and secondary migration resulting from inadequate reintegration opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of coherent reintegration processes between the two states intensifies these challenges, and keeps displaced people in liminal situations. Displacement is not a temporary state of existence but becomes a structural reality, maintained by overlapping security policies and governance gaps of the borderland (Muhammad Islam 2025). In conclusion, forced displacement in the Pakistan-Afghanistan context is not merely an unintended byproduct of conflict but a significant policy outcome shaped by securitized governance and restrictive border management. While states pursue legitimate security objectives, the resulting displacement highlights a critical policy paradox: measures intended to enhance security often generate new forms of human insecurity. Addressing this challenge requires rethinking displacement not only as a humanitarian issue but also as a consequence of state policy choices embedded within broader regional security dynamics.

### **Human Security Crisis and Vulnerability**

The increased securitization of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan has created a serious and worsening human security crisis, especially in the coming four years (2022-2025). The human security approach differs from traditional security approaches, which are based on the concept of state sovereignty and territorial integrity, by emphasizing the protection of people against chronic threats like poverty, violence, forced displacement and inadequate basic services. However, in the context of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, these threats are now often interrelated, with state-centric approach to security and the prevailing instability in Afghanistan further compromising the security and dignity of vulnerable groups. This creates a multi-dimensional crisis in which displacement is both a cause and a result of structural insecurity (Shabana Fayyaz 2023).

One of the most visible aspects of this crisis is the situation of livelihoods of the displaced populations. Increasingly, left without legal job prospects and with shrinking opportunities for formal work, Afghan refugees and undocumented migrants in Pakistan are increasingly socio-economically marginalized by tightening Pakistani immigration policy, legal uncertainty and reduced opportunities for formal employment. At the same time, Afghan returnees face an environment of economic collapse, reduced institutional capacity and humanitarian assistance. Such conditions can seriously diminish coping capacities and dependence on informal coping mechanisms. Without regular income, and limited access to public services, displaced

populations remain in a constant state of vulnerability, without being able to meet their basic needs (Tasadaq Hussain 2026).

Marginalized communities like women, children and the elderly are especially vulnerable to the human security crisis. These are the populations disproportionately impacted by the disruptions to their lives, such as disrupted education, exposure to gender-based violence and limited access to health care as a result of displacement. Children cannot attend school in many instances because of administrative difficulties or lack of documentation, and women are at greater risk in both transit and settlement. While many reports of the situation in the field confirm that displacement is not an equal experience and is gender, age, and socio-economic status specific, the same is true for humanitarian assistance programmes. This disproportionate effect further exacerbates inequalities within displaced communities (Tasadaq Hussain 2026).

Finally, human insecurity in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region stems from the absence of a structural dialogue between the state security policy and human-inclusive governance. Governments focus on border control and counterterrorism goals, while devoting limited consideration to the well-being of affected populations over the long-term. This lack of coherent humanitarian response and long-term protection further deepens this gap, leaving people displaced in a cycle of uncertainty and deprivation. It is time to move beyond state-centric security and towards a holistic strategy that emphasizes human dignity, resilience and sustainable protection of vulnerable populations as a means to address the crisis.

#### **Militarization and Mobility Restrictions**

The growth of Pak-Afghan border militarization since 2022 has led to a shift in movement and interaction across the border. Over time, this border serves as a semi-permeable surface that has been used for the movement of people for trade, family and seasonal work. But, in recent years, the frontier has been turned into a heavily policed and militarised space by the policies of the state for security reasons. Increased fence construction, the creation of new military checkpoints, the use of surveillance technologies and increased patrolling are part of a larger trend of curbing the free movement of people as a major goal of security. The militarisation is justified to a large extent because of fears associated with cross-border militancy, smuggling and irregular migration flows (Zada 2024).

Mobility has become a key policy tool for border management, and changes in mobility have been an important part of many governments' strategies for managing the border. Legal crossing points have been limited or very strictly monitored and documents are now required of Afghan nationals for entry into Pakistan. Such measures have established major obstacles for ordinary civilians, who used to make use of informal but socially accepted mobility avenues. This has made it difficult for many people to use the more formal systems and processes, or to use unofficial and risky ones. The transformation is the result of a wider transformation where mobility is becoming a security threat instead of a socio-economic need (Kashif Iqbal 2025).

Additionally, the militarization of the border has had unintended side effects, such as the growth of informal and unauthorized migration networks. Official channels are becoming less and less accessible, smuggled routes, trafficking networks and unregulated crossings are gaining importance. These parallel systems frequently work under perilous conditions, leaving migrants and displaced persons vulnerable to exploitation, violence, and lack of legal certainty. Therefore, although militarization is meant to increase control and decrease insecurity, it simultaneously

helps to increase the number of more opaque and less controllable forms of movement. This result reveals one of the major drawbacks to forced border control measures (Zada 2024).

Also, mobility has been curtailed, exacerbating already existing socio-economic disruption in borderland communities which have long relied on cross-border movement. Families that are separated by the new border system are having trouble keeping in touch, and traders and workers are reduced in economic opportunities. Local economy disruptions have made economies more vulnerable and increased livelihood insecurity, especially in vulnerable areas. Militarisation, in this regard, is not only a form of security, but also a structural impediment to human mobility and economic resilience. In conclusion, the escalating militarisation of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border reveals the ways in which security policies can profoundly restructure space, mobility and social relationships, to the detriment of human and economic stability.

### **Governance Gaps and Lack of Bilateral Coordination**

One of the main challenges that affect Pakistan-Afghanistan relations in the period of 2022 to 2025 is the lack of effective coordination on both sides. Yet, despite their geographical proximity, socio-cultural ties, and interdependence, both countries have been functioning in mostly isolated policy contexts, especially in the field of security management, migration control and refugee management. This is a governance vacuum, a vacuum that goes far beyond the administrative space, and is a reflection of a lack of trust, institutional capacity and consistent diplomatic action. In reality, it has led to a "piecemeal" response to complex transboundary issues like militancy, forced displacement and irregular migration (Azam 2024).

A clear example of this missing governance is the lack of an integrated and mutually agreed border management regime. Although Pakistan has put in place considerable efforts in terms of physical infrastructure like fencing, surveillance and militarized checkpoints, the institutional weakness and the political changes taking place within Afghanistan have hindered its efforts to engage in coordinated border governance. This is what leads to policy responses, on either side, which are often isolated from any sense of joint planning or shared frameworks. Cross-border militancy, refugee movements and trade disruptions are therefore dealt with on an ad hoc basis, not by preventative or cooperative measures. This division is one of the factors that causes frequent border-related disputes and conflicts in policy (Rabail Zareen 2026). Lack of coordination of migration and refugee management is another governance hurdle. Afghanistan's economic and political volatility still has an impact on migration pressures outward and Pakistan's increasingly stringent immigration policies place a greater emphasis on ensuring security than on humanitarian concerns. Refugee protection and repatriation protocols, refugee documentation, etc. are not covered by bilateral agreements, which has left refugee populations in legal limbo. In many instances, people are left in between two contradictory regulatory frameworks, leading to irregular status, restricted rights and increased vulnerability. This governance gap places the responsibility of managing the situation of displacement on humanitarian actors, especially international NGOs doing field work in the region (Rabail Zareen 2026).

Furthermore, lack of institutional coordination has been a constraint in building confidence between the two states. Diplomatic relations tend to be eventful and crisis-oriented; they are not continuously discussed, but rather start in response to a particular security situation. There are no strong systems in place to ensure intelligence sharing, border dispute resolution, or joint

evaluations of security threats, which continue to build mutual suspicion. The rest of the states interpret each other's actions from a security point of view, adding to the overall security dilemma. Governance gaps are therefore the indication of institutional weaknesses and also actively play a role in the reproduction of insecurity and instability.

To conclude, the failure to achieve good coordination at the bilateral level between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a major hurdle in the way of achieving stable and humane governance in the border area. The lack of institutional mechanisms to cooperate keeps both states trapped in cycles of reactive policymaking, with security concerns in the short term being more important than regional peace and stability in the long run. The need to address these governance gaps calls for a renewed diplomatic effort, for use of shared governance structures and mechanisms and for the support of the multilateral community, including the development of support mechanisms that can incorporate security considerations into the humanitarian and development agenda.

### **Regional and Geopolitical Implications**

The changing dynamics of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan from 2022 to 2025 have profound regional and geopolitical consequences, which go far beyond bilateral relations. The regional dimension of instability along this border directly impacts South Asia's wider security framework with regard to transnational militancy, irregular migration and economic linkages. The rise in security concerns, including by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and non-state actors (NSAs), has led to a heightened concern among neighbouring states of spill-over effects, creating a prolonged uncertainty situation. In this sense, the border is not just a line between two states, but a keystone of a larger regional security complex, where instability at the border not only impacts on that region but resonates throughout the entire region (Dilawar Khan 2025).

The geopolitical landscape of Afghanistan has been changed by the international forces' withdrawal and the gradual withdrawal of Western forces from the country. The international forces' withdrawal and the gradual pullout of Western forces from Afghanistan have resulted in a significant shift in the regional balance of power. The change has shifted the burden on regional actors, especially Pakistan, Iran, China, and the Central Asian countries to address security and humanitarian issues arising out of Afghanistan. But these efforts have been hampered by the lack of a coordinated regional framework. Regional mistrust and competing strategic interests have not allowed for a common strategy to emerge for border management and displacement governance. Consequently, Afghanistan has increasingly been a region of contestation and struggle between the regional powers and its internal instability (Popalzay, 2024).

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) complicates the border dynamics with China. The security in the western border of Pakistan is seen as important for the security of wider connectivity projects under the Belt and Road Initiative. The security and displacement situation in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region is not only a humanitarian issue but also a strategic vulnerability for the Region's economic integration. Likewise, Iran and the Central Asian countries are worried about the migration of refugees and the possibility of the spread of militancy across borders, further exacerbating the cross-border nature of the crisis. While all of these concerns are shared, coordinated regional responses have not been widespread or comprehensive (Fakhar Hussain 2021).

Internationally, the situation of less focus by major Western actors has had an impact on the governance of Afghanistan, which has implications for humanitarian assistance and institutional

support. The role of international organisations addressing displacement and human security issues continues, albeit with limited access and capacity due to funding shortages. As a result of this partial disengagement, the responsibility for managing the crisis has been handed to the regional states, which don't always have the institutional capacity or political consensus to implement a long-term solution. In this regard, the Pakistan-Afghanistan border has become a symbol of the growing tendency to deal with localized conflicts and displacement out of context of global response mechanisms (Valijonovich 2025).

Overall, the geopolitical consequences of Pakistan-Afghanistan border affairs highlight the intertwined dynamics of security, displacement, and regional stability. The issue of insecurity and forced migration in this area is destabilizing bilateral relations and is also impacting on South Asian and Eurasian connectivity initiatives. Solutions to these challenges lie in moving beyond a piecemeal state-based approach toward a more regionalized approach, focusing on cooperative security, joint humanitarian responsibility and continued diplomatic engagement.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of Pakistan Afghanistan relations on the border from 2022 to 2025 is a complex mix of security considerations, state actions and human vulnerability. The study shows that securitization of the border, as a result of growing militancy, undocumented migration and concerns on the control of the territory, has fundamentally changed the nature of the interaction across the border. The relatively permeable and socially cohesive frontier has slowly become a militarized and bureaucratized border. This shift is part of a larger transformation towards increased security concerns in states, which are more likely to stop patterns of mobility and socio-economic interdependence.

One of the most striking conclusions of this study is that there is a longstanding security dilemma between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both sides have taken measures for their internal security that are seen as threatening by the other side. For Pakistan the fortification and expansion of borders, the deportation policies, and the surveillance of the population are perceived as coercive, and for Afghanistan the lack of capacity to control the non-state actors gives a sense of insecurity to Pakistan. This distrust has led to a reactive policy-making cycle that leads to counter-responses by one actor that in turn result in further measures by the other and increased tensions. The security dilemma, thus, remains a structural impediment in the region to sustainable peace and stability. Finally, the study finds that forced displacement in such situations should be examined beyond the framework of armed conflict or state fragility. Rather, it has to be acknowledged as a major policy result of securitized governance as well. The enhanced border security, prosecution of illegal immigrants and the limitation of migration routes have all had a significant impact on the scale of migration. The consequences of these policies in terms of humanitarian issues such as irregular migration, separation of families and forced displacement have been both adverse and unintended. The result contradicts some of the dominant talking points, which argue that displacement is caused by the humanitarian crisis, and not because of state policy.

Another key finding is about the human security crisis that is unfolding out of these dynamics. The study clearly shows that displaced populations are vulnerable in many ways such as having limited access to livelihoods, health care, education, and legal protection. Women, children and vulnerable groups are especially vulnerable, as they are subjected to a heavier burden of insecurity. The continued existence of such circumstances highlights a serious mismatch between

the state-oriented security approaches and the lived experiences of the populations concerned. Human security concerns have been systematically downplayed in favour of territorial control and counter terror goals, resulting in a prolonged humanitarian situation in the border area. The research also emphasizes on structural governance gaps and absence of coordination between both sides of the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan as one of the main sources of instability. Lack of institutional arrangements for the management of the border, migration governance, and security cooperation has led to ad hoc and weak policy responses. This governance void exacerbates mistrust between the two states and weakens the ability of both to tackle common issues efficiently. Without adequate coordination there is continued unilateral action in policy behavior which further perpetuates the cycle of insecurity and displacement. To sum up, the Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral relations during 2022-25 point to the inadequacies of the securitized and state-centric approach in dealing with transborder challenges. Based on the results of this research, it is concluded that sustainable stability can not only be secured by militarization and policy on restriction of mobility. Rather, there is a pressing need for more integrated approaches that take into account security concerns and human security concerns, and are backed by sound bilateral and regional cooperation frameworks. Breaking this cycle of insecurity, mistrust and forced displacement is only achievable through sustained diplomatic engagement and institutional coordination, coupled with a transition to inclusive governance in this strategically significant borderland.

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