who were not incorporated into the Afghan Local Police now find themselves potentially exposed to reprisal by the armed groups.

Areas under the control of armed groups are particularly susceptible to generating displacement, especially where the government is determined to regain control or conduct operations from time to time. Given the dangers that abound during military operations, many local residents were displaced during the surge, and similar dynamics are expected in the next two years in areas in southern Afghanistan which are held by armed insurgents or where armed groups are influential.

There are clear indications that the number of IDPs is likely to increase over the next two years as the Afghan government strengthens its position in most areas by putting in more forces, whereas the Taliban is likely to take advantage of the IMF departure. Since conflict areas are mostly rural areas, most of the IDPs will be from rural areas – unused to city life and unable to earn a living if not by farming. It is important to have a system to register new IDPs in order to ensure that vulnerable IDPs receive assistance quickly to help them survive.

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1. Improvised explosive devices

Stateless in Afghanistan

Maira Kuppers

A group of people in eastern Afghanistan – known to the authorities and others as Bangriwala or Vangawala in this area – have reported recently been forcibly relocated because of their lack of identity documents. These people lead a nomadic lifestyle, following economic and trading opportunities and are generally seen as culturally different from the rest of society, because women often go outside the house for work or to beg, while men stay at home. The high number of begging women in the bazaars in Jalalabad and Kandahar was reportedly bothering local citizens; it was eventually resolved that the so-called Bangriwala were not Afghans and that they should be removed to an unknown location, possibly neighbouring Pakistan.

Afghanistan’s constitution states that all Afghan citizens should be treated equally, without discrimination. The citizenship law issued in 2000 rules that a person who has been living in the country for more than five years, has not committed any crimes and is aged over 18 can apply for citizenship; furthermore, it explicitly states that children born inside Afghanistan to parents with unclear citizenship status have the right to apply for citizenship.

The problem lies in how people have to apply for a tazkera, the document that proves citizenship of Afghanistan and allows access to education, health care, legal representation, etc. A local elder – who has to be registered as an official representative of the community that the person claims to belong to – has to verify that the person is part of the community or the son/daughter of a community member who already has a tazkera and is registered. The practical problems for Bangriwala (or other nomadic populations) are two-fold. First of all, most of their local elders are not officially registered, which makes it impossible for them to vouch for tazkeras. Secondly, most Bangriwala have never been registered in the national archives and thus have left no bureaucratic trace, which makes it more difficult for their successors to register.

And without the tazkera, people deemed inconvenient by the authorities can be relocated or sent out of the country. Our researchers were told repeatedly that a large group of Bangriwala had been deported about a month previously: yet another cause of displacement in Afghanistan that requires a just and sustainable solution.

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See Stateless mini-feature in this issue and FMR issue 32 www.fmreview.org/statelessness