

4.3.4. Serious and individual threat

COMMON ANALYSIS | Last update: June 2026

In the context of the ‘sliding scale’, each case should be assessed individually, taking into account the applicant’s personal circumstances together with the nature and intensity of the violence in their home area (see also 4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence). It is not feasible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what the relevant personal circumstances could be and how those should be assessed. Individual elements can exist in combination. Other factors may also be relevant.

Below are some examples of personal circumstances to be taken into account, where the ‘mere presence’ threshold is not reached, in the context of Afghanistan:

- **Age**: incidents of children becoming victims of explosive remnants of war continued to be documented, as Afghanistan is among the countries most contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war. Children may also not be in a position to quickly assess a changing situation and avoid the risks it entails. In some cases, elderly age may also impact the person's ability to assess and avoid risks associated with an armed conflict.

- **Gender**: men may be at higher risk of violence targeting public places, as men are the ones mainly being outside the home and visiting such locations. On the other hand, the gender norms in Afghanistan suggest that women may have less information regarding the current security situation and the associated risks. Moreover, if the violence moves closer to the residence of people, e.g. in the case of ground engagements in populated areas, women would have a more limited ability to avoid it. In the cases when they do have the ability to assess and anticipate the risk, women and girls may also be limited in their ability to avoid the violence, as they need to be accompanied by a close male relative in order to travel within the country.

- **Health condition and disabilities, including mental health issues**: indiscriminate attacks in Afghanistan have taken place in public spaces. People with disabilities related to mobility may not be able to move without help. Furthermore, people with mental health issues might not be able to quickly assess and avoid risky situations. Therefore, some persons with health conditions may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

- **Economic situation**: the economic situation in Afghanistan is difficult. People in dire economic situation may be forced to expose themselves to risks, such as working in areas which are affected by indiscriminate violence.

- **Knowledge of the area**: some Afghans were born or have lived for an extensive period of time outside Afghanistan or in another part of the country. Such individuals may not have knowledge of the area and experience of local violence patterns; therefore, they may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

- **Profession and/or place of residence**: indiscriminate attacks in Afghanistan have taken place in public spaces. Persons who, due to their place of residence or professional activity, are frequently in the vicinity of such places (e.g. living or working near the Pakistani border) may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

- **Family members or support network**: some Afghans were born or have lived for an extensive period of time outside Afghanistan. Such individuals may not have knowledge of the area and experience of local violence patterns; they may also lack the support network to inform them on such issues or provide them with assistance. Therefore, they may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

In some cases, these personal circumstances may be cumulative, leading to enhanced exposure to indiscriminate violence.

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