

5.3.4. Serious and individual threat

COMMON ANALYSIS
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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 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 Pakistan:

- **Age**: this personal circumstance would be of particular importance in relation to the ability of the person to assess the risks. Children may 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**: it is difficult to ascertain whether and in what circumstances men or women would be at a higher risk in general. It would also depend on other factors, such as the nature of the violence in the area. For example, men may be at higher risk of violence targeting local markets, banks, governmental institutions, as they are the ones more frequently being outside the home and visiting such locations. On the other hand, general gender norms in Pakistan 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 drone strikes or security operations in populated areas, women may have a more limited ability to avoid it.

- **Health condition and disabilities, including mental health issues**: serious illnesses and disabilities may result in restricted mobility for a person, making it difficult for them to avoid immediate risks and, in the case of mental illnesses, it can make them less capable of assessing risks. In other cases, such conditions may require frequent visits to a healthcare facility.

- **Economic situation**: applicants in a particularly dire economic situation may also be less able to avoid the risks associated with indiscriminate violence. They may be forced to expose themselves to risks such as working in areas which are affected by violence. They may also have less resources to avoid an imminent threat by relocating to a different area.

- **Knowledge of the area**: the relevant knowledge of the area concerns the patterns of violence that affect it. Different elements may contribute to a person's knowledge of the area. It can relate to their own experience in the specific area or in areas similarly affected by indiscriminate violence, or to their connection to a support network which would ensure they are informed of the relevant risks.

- **Occupation and/or place of residence**: the occupation the person is likely to have when they return to their home area may also be relevant. It may, for example, be linked to the need for a trader to travel through conflict-affected areas for their livelihoods or for a journalist or a physician to operate in or nearby a conflict zone.

- **Family members or support network**: the family or support network can be a source of information, that is necessary to evaluate dangerous situations. Therefore, a person with no or limited support network may be more exposed to indiscriminate violence. On the contrary, a person with a substantial family or support network may be more able to assess the risks.

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

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