BORDER SECURITY AND MIGRANT PROTECTION: THE COMPLEXITIES OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY IN THE AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN CONTEXT

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Abstract
The Afghanistan-Pakistan border, a critical geopolitical and humanitarian hotspot, has been a site of complex challenges concerning border security, migrant protection, and national sovereignty. Spanning 2,640 kilometers, the Durand Line divides ethnic Pashtun communities, fueling tensions between the two nations. Since the Taliban's resurgence in 2021, over 2.7 million Afghan refugees have sought refuge in Pakistan, significantly increasing the burden on the host country's resources and infrastructure. Pakistan has taken stringent measures, including the construction of a border fence, to control the influx of migrants and mitigate security risks from insurgent groups and militancy. However, these measures often conflict with international human rights obligations, particularly the protection of refugees as outlined in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the principle of non-refoulement. Migrants face dire conditions, including forced deportations, exploitation, and lack of access to basic services. This research explores the delicate balance between national sovereignty and human rights, evaluating the effectiveness of Pakistan's border policies and international legal frameworks. The study highlights the need for more integrated and humane approaches to border security and migrant protection, with recommendations for enhanced bilateral cooperation, legal pathways for refugees, and the use of technology to secure borders without compromising human rights.
Keywords: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Border Security, Migrant Protection, Sovereignty
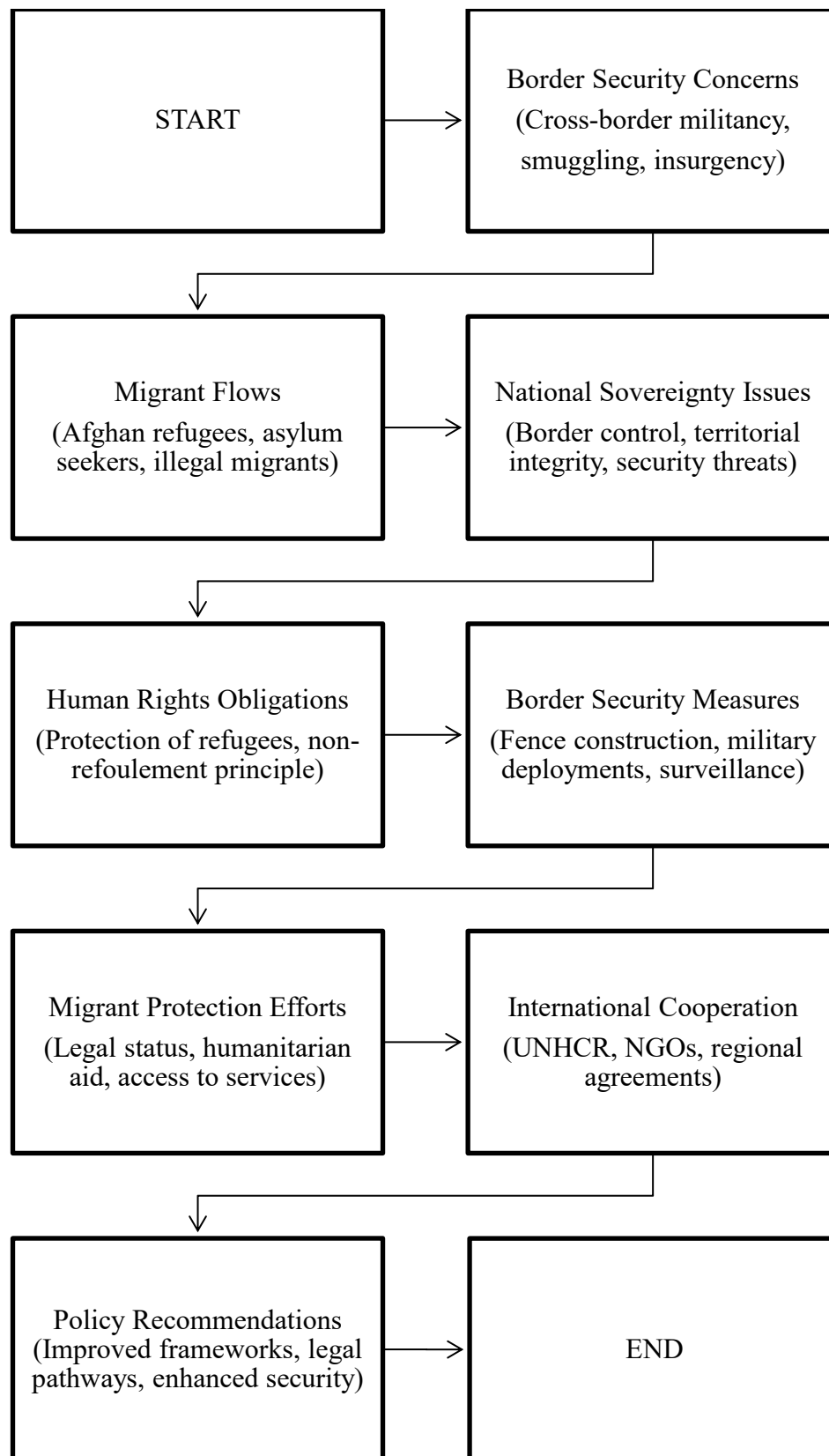
Figure 1: Flow Chart Diagram

1.   Introduction

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border, often referred to as the Durand Line, has been a focal point of geopolitical tension, humanitarian crises, and security challenges for decades (Khan, 2025). Spanning approximately 2,640 kilometers, this porous and rugged frontier has witnessed the movement of millions of people, both legally and illegally, due to conflicts, economic hardships, and political instability in Afghanistan (Raza, 2025). The intricate interplay between border security, human rights, national sovereignty, and migrant protection in this region presents a complex landscape that demands comprehensive analysis and understanding. The historical context of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is marked by colonial legacies, ethnic divisions, and fluctuating political dynamics (Sayeed, 2024). Established in 1893 by the British colonial administration, the Durand Line was intended to demarcate spheres of influence between British India and Afghanistan. However, this artificial boundary divided ethnic Pashtun communities and has remained a contentious issue between the two nations. Over time, the border has become a conduit for cross-border movements, both voluntary and forced, primarily driven by the socio-political upheavals in Afghanistan.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, followed by the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s, and the subsequent U.S.-led invasion in 2001, have significantly impacted the region's stability. Each phase of conflict has led to waves of displacement, with millions of Afghans seeking refuge in neighboring Pakistan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that over 2.7 million Afghan refugees were residing in Pakistan as of 2023, making it one of the largest refugee-hosting countries globally (UNHCR, 2023). In recent years, the situation has become more precarious. The Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in 2021 has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, leading to increased displacement and vulnerability among Afghan nationals. Concurrently, Pakistan has faced mounting security concerns, economic challenges, and political pressures, prompting the government to implement stringent border control measures, including the construction of a border fence and the initiation of mass deportations of undocumented migrants (Pakistan Ministry of Interior, 2023).

1.1 Problem Statement

The dual objectives of ensuring national security and upholding human rights present a significant challenge in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border context. While Pakistan's efforts to secure its borders are legitimate, they often conflict with the rights and protections owed to migrants under international law. The forced repatriation of Afghan refugees, many of whom have lived in Pakistan for decades, raises serious human rights concerns, including the risk of persecution, lack of access to basic services, and potential statelessness. The lack of a coherent and humane migration policy exacerbates the vulnerability of migrants, leaving them susceptible to exploitation, arbitrary detention, and deportation. Moreover, the absence of effective bilateral mechanisms between Afghanistan and Pakistan to address these issues further complicates the situation. The international community's response has been varied, with some countries providing aid and resettlement opportunities, while others have imposed restrictive measures, often influenced by domestic political considerations.

1.2 Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Analyze the interplay between border security measures and human rights protections in the Afghanistan-Pakistan context.
2. Examine the impact of national sovereignty concerns on the treatment and protection of migrants.

3. Assess the effectiveness of existing policies and international frameworks in addressing the challenges faced by Afghan migrants.
4. Propose recommendations for a balanced approach that ensures both security and humanitarian considerations are met.

1.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. How do Pakistan's border security measures affect the rights and protections of Afghan migrants?
2. In what ways do national sovereignty concerns influence the treatment of migrants at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border?
3. What are the limitations and challenges of current international frameworks in safeguarding the rights of Afghan migrants?
4. How can Pakistan and Afghanistan develop collaborative strategies to address border security and migrant protection effectively?

2. Literature Review

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border region has long been a focal point for discussions on border security, human rights, national sovereignty, and migrant protection. This literature review synthesizes recent scholarly and policy-oriented research from 2022 to 2025 to provide a comprehensive understanding of these interconnected issues. Border security is a fundamental aspect of a nation's sovereignty and security apparatus. It encompasses measures to control and monitor borders to prevent illegal activities such as smuggling, trafficking, and unauthorized migration. In the Afghanistan-Pakistan context, border security is particularly complex due to the porous nature of the Durand Line and the presence of various militant groups operating across the border. Recent studies have highlighted the challenges faced by Pakistan in securing its border with Afghanistan, citing issues like cross-border terrorism, drug trafficking, and the movement of militants (Khan, 2025). Furthermore, the implementation of border security measures often involves balancing national security concerns with humanitarian obligations, leading to tensions and policy dilemmas (Hussain & Shah, 2023).

The protection of human rights for migrants is a critical area of concern, especially in conflict zones. International human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1951 Refugee Convention, set forth obligations for states to protect individuals fleeing persecution. In the case of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, numerous reports have documented instances of arbitrary detention, forced repatriation, and denial of access to basic services (Amnesty International, 2025). These human rights violations are often exacerbated by the lack of a coherent and humane migration policy, leaving migrants vulnerable to exploitation and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2023). National sovereignty refers to a state's authority to govern itself without external interference. In the context of border security, sovereignty is often invoked to justify stringent immigration controls and border enforcement measures. However, the assertion of sovereignty can conflict with international human rights obligations, particularly when it leads to the marginalization or mistreatment of migrants (Redpath, 2024). The Afghanistan-Pakistan border illustrates this tension, as both nations assert their sovereignty while facing international scrutiny over their treatment of migrants and refugees (Solis, 2023).

The Durand Line, established in 1893, demarcates the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. This border has been a source of contention due to its arbitrary division of ethnic Pashtun communities and its role in regional geopolitics. In recent years, the situation has been further complicated by the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the subsequent influx

of refugees into Pakistan. Reports indicate that over 2.7 million Afghan refugees were residing in Pakistan as of 2023, with many facing uncertain legal statuses and limited access to rights and services (UNHCR, 2023). The border region has also witnessed frequent skirmishes between Afghan and Pakistani forces, leading to civilian casualties and displacement (Wikipedia, 2025). Existing literature provides valuable insights into the complexities of border security, human rights, and national sovereignty in the Afghanistan-Pakistan context. However, several gaps remain in the research. There is a need for more empirical studies examining the lived experiences of Afghan migrants in Pakistan, particularly regarding their access to healthcare, education, and employment. Additionally, while policy analyses are abundant, there is limited research on the effectiveness of bilateral agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan in addressing migration and border security issues. Furthermore, the role of international organizations and non-governmental organizations in mediating between national interests and human rights protections warrants further exploration.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for analyzing the complex dynamics between border security, human rights, and national sovereignty in the Afghanistan-Pakistan context draws from key theories in international relations, human rights law, and sovereignty. These frameworks allow for a comprehensive understanding of the tensions that arise between securing borders, protecting migrant rights, and asserting state sovereignty.

3.1 Theories of National Sovereignty

National sovereignty is the cornerstone of the modern international system, emphasizing a state's supreme authority within its borders, free from external interference (Besson, 2023). According to traditional realist theory in international relations, sovereignty is non-negotiable, and states must prioritize their security and territorial integrity above all (Mearsheimer, 2024). Realist thinkers such as Waltz (2023) argue that states operate in an anarchic international system where security is the primary concern. This theory justifies stringent border security measures as vital for national sovereignty, especially in regions with significant cross-border challenges like Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, more recent theories, such as those proposed by international political theorists like Krasner (2025), introduce a concept of "sovereignty as responsibility." This concept suggests that sovereignty is not just about control but also entails the responsibility to protect human rights within a state's borders (Krasner, 2025). This model highlights the tensions between state sovereignty and international obligations to protect vulnerable populations, particularly migrants who may not enjoy full protection under the state's policies (Solis, 2023). In the context of Afghanistan and Pakistan, national sovereignty has often been invoked to justify tight control over borders, particularly in response to security threats and the massive influx of Afghan refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Yet, these sovereignty-based policies may contradict international human rights obligations, which leads to significant ethical and legal dilemmas (Redpath, 2024).

3.2 Human Rights Frameworks for Migrants

The protection of migrant rights is governed by various international human rights frameworks, which emphasize the protection of individuals who cross borders due to conflict, persecution, or other forms of displacement. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the 1951 Refugee Convention set clear standards for migrant and refugee protections, underscoring the right to seek asylum and the prohibition of refoulement (UNHCR, 2024). Furthermore, international human rights law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), provides frameworks that require states to respect the rights of individuals, including migrants, regardless of their legal status (Besson, 2023). Human rights scholars argue

that state sovereignty should not undermine the obligation to protect migrants, especially in cases of asylum seekers (Solis, 2023). This legal framework is crucial for understanding the protection of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, where the state has been criticized for its response to migrant protection, including forced deportations and lack of access to basic services (Amnesty International, 2025). The principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of individuals to countries where they face serious harm, is particularly relevant for the Afghan-Pakistan border. As Afghanistan has been a source of instability, many Afghan migrants have sought refuge in Pakistan, and the international community has called for Pakistan to uphold its responsibilities under these frameworks (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

3.3 Security and Sovereignty Models in International Relations

Theories of security and sovereignty in international relations offer a broader lens through which to examine the dynamics at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In the traditional realist view, the state is the central actor in the international system, and security is often equated with military power and territorial control (Mearsheimer, 2024). This theory strongly influences Pakistan's approach to border security, especially given the long-standing threats posed by insurgent groups and militants operating along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (Khan, 2025). However, the growing influence of global security and human security models challenges this state-centric view. Human security, as articulated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022), emphasizes the safety and well-being of individuals rather than state borders. This model advocates for the protection of migrants and refugees as part of a broader conception of security that transcends state boundaries. By focusing on individual rights and needs, human security theory provides a counterpoint to traditional security models that prioritize state sovereignty and territorial integrity (Besson, 2023). Additionally, constructivist approaches to international relations (Wendt, 2024) suggest that the meaning of sovereignty and security is socially constructed through norms, practices, and shared understandings. In the case of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, this implies that sovereignty is not an absolute concept but one shaped by international norms and the evolving global discourse on refugee rights and border security (Besson, 2023). In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks of national sovereignty, human rights, and security models provide essential insights into the Afghanistan-Pakistan border issues. While traditional theories of sovereignty emphasize state control, contemporary human rights frameworks and human security models offer more inclusive and humane approaches, which must be considered in addressing the challenges faced by migrants in this region.

4. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Border: A Case Study

4.1 Geopolitical Context of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border, established in 1893 as the Durand Line, is one of the most contentious borders in the world, serving as a physical and symbolic divide between two neighboring states with shared cultural and ethnic ties. This 2,640-kilometer-long border separates the Pashtun ethnic group, one of the largest ethnic groups in the region, and has been a source of tension due to differing national interests and historical grievances (Solis, 2023). The geopolitical significance of the border is amplified by regional power struggles, particularly the influence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and Pakistan's ongoing concerns over cross-border militancy, insurgency, and terrorism (Sayeed, 2024). The border has also played a strategic role in the global "War on Terror," with both countries bearing the brunt of security challenges related to extremism and militancy (Khan, 2025).

4.2 Border Security Concerns in Afghanistan and Pakistan

Border security is a critical issue for both Afghanistan and Pakistan, with cross-border militancy and illegal activities posing serious security threats. Pakistan, having dealt with insurgencies linked to Afghan militant groups, has fortified its side of the border by erecting fences and deploying military personnel to curb infiltration (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024). However, these security measures have not completely eliminated the security threats, and tensions frequently flare up between border forces, often resulting in civilian casualties (Khan, 2025). On the Afghan side, the security situation is further complicated by political instability and the Taliban's control over the region, which impacts their ability to manage the border effectively and cooperatively with Pakistan (Hussain, 2023).

4.3 Migrant Flows Across the Border

Migration between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been a longstanding phenomenon, primarily driven by conflict, economic hardship, and instability in Afghanistan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that millions of Afghans have sought refuge in Pakistan since the 1980s, with over 2.7 million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan as of 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). The flow of migrants has often been irregular, with many crossing the border without legal documentation, complicating efforts to regulate their movement and protect their rights (Hussain, 2024). The return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan in 2021 has exacerbated the situation, leading to renewed migration and increasing the strain on Pakistan's resources and border security infrastructure (Raza, 2025).

4.4 Human Rights Challenges Faced by Migrants

Afghan migrants face severe human rights challenges, particularly in terms of access to basic services such as healthcare, education, and employment. Many migrants live in informal settlements in Pakistan, often facing exploitation and discrimination, with limited protection under Pakistan's national laws (Amnesty International, 2025). The policy of forced repatriation implemented by Pakistan in recent years has also been criticized for violating international norms, including the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits the return of migrants to a country where they may face persecution (Human Rights Watch, 2024). These issues have left Afghan migrants vulnerable to human rights abuses and legal uncertainties.

4.5 National Sovereignty and Border Management

The sovereignty of both Afghanistan and Pakistan is often invoked in the context of border management, as both nations seek to control migration and security within their borders. Pakistan's national security concerns have led it to take a hardline stance on border control, while Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, has struggled to assert control over its borders, particularly in areas with significant ethnic Pashtun populations (Sayeed, 2024). The balance between ensuring national security and adhering to international human rights obligations remains a critical issue in both countries' border management strategies (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024).

5. The Role of International Bodies and Agreements

5.1 The United Nations and Human Rights Protection

The United Nations, through its agencies such as the UNHCR, plays a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid and advocating for the rights of refugees and migrants. In the Afghanistan-Pakistan context, the UNHCR has worked to ensure that Afghan refugees are treated in accordance with international standards, despite the challenges posed by national security concerns and the lack of cooperation between the two countries (UNHCR, 2023). The UN's efforts focus on providing legal protection, assistance, and advocating for solutions to the refugee crisis in the region (Besson, 2023).

5.2 Bilateral Agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan

Bilateral agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan have historically been instrumental in managing migration and border security. These agreements often include provisions for the protection of refugees, border security coordination, and the management of migrant flows. However, the lack of consistent implementation and trust between the two nations has hindered the effectiveness of these agreements (Khan, 2025). More robust and mutually agreed-upon frameworks are needed to address the challenges posed by border security and migrant protection (Sayeed, 2024).

5.3 International Law and Migrant Rights

International law, particularly the 1951 Refugee Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), sets forth binding obligations for states to protect the rights of migrants and refugees. However, the enforcement of these laws is often inconsistent, especially in the context of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, where sovereignty concerns frequently overshadow human rights protections (Amnesty International, 2025). Strengthening international cooperation and compliance with these legal frameworks is essential to ensure the protection of migrant rights.

5.4 The Role of NGOs and International Organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations play a vital role in filling the gaps left by national governments in terms of humanitarian assistance and migrant protection. NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have been instrumental in providing healthcare, shelter, and legal aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024). These organizations also advocate for policy changes and work with local authorities to improve the living conditions of migrants.

6. Challenges in Border Security and Migrant Protection

6.1 Security Threats and Humanitarian Crises

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border is a site of ongoing security threats, exacerbated by the presence of militant groups, insurgents, and traffickers. These security concerns are intensified by the cross-border movement of these groups, which significantly hampers border control efforts (Khan, 2025). The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan has led to a deteriorating security situation, with many fleeing the violence. The resulting humanitarian crisis has put additional strain on Pakistan's resources, which is now home to millions of Afghan refugees (Sayeed, 2024). Humanitarian aid often struggles to meet the demands of migrants, who face issues such as lack of access to healthcare, education, and basic shelter (UNHCR, 2023).

6.2 Balancing Sovereignty and Human Rights

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border poses significant challenges in balancing state sovereignty and the protection of human rights. Pakistan, while attempting to secure its borders from the influx of migrants and militants, also faces international pressure to adhere to human rights standards, such as the prohibition of refoulement (Amnesty International, 2025). The delicate balance between securing national interests and meeting international obligations becomes particularly difficult when dealing with forced deportations and detentions of Afghan migrants, which can lead to severe human rights violations (Human Rights Watch, 2024). Sovereignty-based policies often clash with global refugee protection norms, as Pakistan faces difficulty in managing its border security without compromising the rights of displaced individuals (Redpath, 2024).

6.3 Legal and Ethical Dilemmas

One of the primary challenges at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is the legal and ethical dilemma surrounding migrant protection. International law mandates the protection of

refugees, yet Pakistan has been criticized for violating these norms by deporting Afghan refugees, many of whom have been in the country for decades (Solis, 2023). The ethical dilemma arises when the government prioritizes security over the humanitarian needs of refugees, leading to the marginalization of vulnerable groups (Besson, 2023). The legal ambiguity of many migrants' status in Pakistan further complicates the situation, as many Afghan refugees lack the necessary documentation to access services, which often results in them being excluded from the legal protection afforded to citizens (UNHCR, 2023).

6.4 The Role of Border Infrastructure and Technology

Border infrastructure and technological advancements play a crucial role in border security and the management of migration. Pakistan has invested heavily in constructing a fence along its border with Afghanistan to control migration and prevent the movement of insurgents (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024). While such infrastructure projects enhance security, they also restrict the free movement of refugees and migrants, often leading to humanitarian concerns. The use of technology, such as surveillance drones and biometric tracking, can help strengthen border security while minimizing human involvement in migrant control. However, the application of such technology raises ethical concerns about privacy and the potential for human rights violations (Khan, 2025).

7. Policy Analysis

7.1 Pakistan's Border Security Policies

Pakistan's approach to border security has evolved significantly, particularly after the 9/11 attacks, which heightened security concerns. The country has implemented strict border controls, including fencing along the Durand Line, to curb illegal crossings and militancy (Khan, 2025). However, these measures have been criticized for being overly restrictive, negatively impacting refugees and migrants who are unable to access the support they need. Furthermore, the political instability in Afghanistan complicates Pakistan's efforts to manage the flow of migrants effectively, as many migrants enter through informal routes (Sayeed, 2024).

7.2 Afghanistan's Border Security Policies

Afghanistan, under Taliban control since 2021, has struggled to manage its borders effectively due to internal conflicts and a lack of infrastructure. While the Taliban have made attempts to assert control over the border region, cross-border activities, including the movement of militants and drug trafficking, continue to undermine their efforts (Sayeed, 2024). The instability in Afghanistan has resulted in large-scale displacement, leading many Afghans to seek refuge in neighboring Pakistan. Afghanistan's border security policies are largely reactive, with limited capacity to regulate the movement of people and goods (Raza, 2025).

7.3 Regional and Global Approaches to Border Security and Migrant Protection

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border issue requires a coordinated approach at the regional and global levels. Regional cooperation between Afghanistan, Pakistan, and neighboring countries is essential to managing migration and enhancing border security. The UNHCR, alongside other international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), plays a crucial role in providing humanitarian aid and advocating for the protection of migrants' rights (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024). At the global level, the implementation of international legal frameworks, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, is vital to ensure the protection of migrants while addressing national security concerns (Amnesty International, 2025).

7.4 Recommendations for Policy Improvements

To improve the current situation, several policy changes are necessary. First, Pakistan should focus on a more balanced approach to border security that includes both humanitarian

considerations and national security imperatives. This could include expanding refugee camps and providing legal pathways for migrants to gain temporary status, which would provide them with access to services without jeopardizing security (Redpath, 2024). Second, Afghanistan needs to improve its border management systems, with the assistance of international partners, to prevent cross-border insurgency and facilitate the movement of refugees safely (Sayeed, 2024). Third, stronger regional cooperation is required to develop comprehensive migration management systems that include both security and humanitarian responses (Khan, 2025). Finally, the international community must hold both Afghanistan and Pakistan accountable for ensuring the protection of human rights for all migrants, regardless of their legal status.

8. Discussion

8.1 The Tension Between Sovereignty and Human Rights

The ongoing tension between national sovereignty and human rights in the Afghanistan-Pakistan border context is evident in the security measures adopted by Pakistan and the humanitarian needs of Afghan migrants. While Pakistan has the right to secure its borders and protect its national security, the human rights of migrants cannot be overlooked. Sovereignty, when strictly interpreted, often leads to the implementation of policies such as border fences, militarized zones, and forced deportations, all of which directly affect migrants' rights (Sayeed, 2024). The protection of refugees, as prescribed by international law, clashes with these security policies, especially as migrant groups face violence, detention, and lack of access to essential services. This tension between the imperative to protect sovereignty and the duty to safeguard human rights highlights the need for a more balanced approach. International bodies like the UNHCR play an essential role in addressing these conflicts, urging states to respect both national security concerns and human rights (Amnesty International, 2025).

8.2 Migrant Protection Challenges and Solutions

Afghan migrants face significant protection challenges, from being vulnerable to forced deportations and exploitation to lacking access to basic social services and legal status. In Pakistan, many Afghan refugees live in informal settlements with little access to healthcare, education, or employment opportunities (Human Rights Watch, 2024). These vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the lack of a coherent and humane migration policy. Solutions to these challenges require a more robust legal framework, which recognizes the rights of refugees while ensuring national security. An integrated approach would allow refugees to gain temporary legal status, enabling them to access essential services while maintaining border security. Additionally, both countries need to develop clearer and more cooperative frameworks for managing migration flows, focusing on creating safe migration pathways and reducing the risk of exploitation (Redpath, 2024). Furthermore, international organizations and NGOs can play an essential role in mitigating these challenges by providing humanitarian assistance, advocating for refugee rights, and working with national governments to ensure compliance with international human rights standards (UNHCR, 2023).

8.3 Border Security Innovations and Best Practices

Innovations in border security, such as the use of biometric tracking, drones, and other surveillance technologies, are increasingly important for managing migration flows while ensuring national security. While these technologies enhance the capacity of border control agencies, they also raise concerns about privacy and the potential for human rights violations (Khan, 2025). Best practices for border management should involve a mix of technological innovation and human-centered approaches, emphasizing the protection of refugees' rights while preventing illegal activities. For example, technological advancements in data sharing and cross-border cooperation could be used to facilitate more secure and efficient management

of migrant flows, with an emphasis on safety and human dignity (Besson, 2023). At the same time, Pakistan and Afghanistan need to collaborate more effectively in border security measures, sharing intelligence and resources to ensure better coordination and the humane treatment of migrants.

8.4 The Future of Afghanistan-Pakistan Relations in Border Management

The future of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations in border management is likely to be shaped by both geopolitical factors and internal political dynamics. With the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan, the nature of cooperation between the two countries is uncertain, given the complex history and divergent interests of the two states (Sayeed, 2024). However, both nations face shared challenges in managing cross-border security and migration. As international actors increasingly focus on the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, the role of the Afghan government in securing borders and cooperating with Pakistan will be pivotal. In the future, there is potential for more robust and comprehensive agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan, focusing on border security, migration management, and refugee protection. Such agreements will need to incorporate regional cooperation, with the involvement of international organizations, to address the multi-dimensional issues at the border (Farooqi & Rauf, 2024).

9. Conclusion

This research has highlighted the complexities and challenges in managing the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, focusing on the intersection of border security, national sovereignty, and migrant protection. The analysis showed that while both Afghanistan and Pakistan assert their sovereignty through strict border control measures, these policies often conflict with international human rights obligations, particularly concerning the treatment of Afghan migrants. The implementation of security measures like border fences and military deployments has intensified the vulnerability of migrants, who face discrimination, forced deportations, and a lack of access to basic services. The findings underscore the critical need for integrated strategies that combine security concerns with human rights protections. Border security is a legitimate concern for any nation, but the rights of migrants and refugees must also be considered. An integrated approach that ensures security while upholding humanitarian principles is essential for creating a sustainable and just border management system. Both Pakistan and Afghanistan must focus on balancing national security with refugee protection, recognizing that these goals are not mutually exclusive. This approach would include improved legal frameworks, international cooperation, and regional coordination to address the needs of migrants without compromising security. Future research should focus on several key areas. First, further studies are needed on the effectiveness of the bilateral agreements between Afghanistan and Pakistan and how these agreements can be improved to address migration and security issues more comprehensively. Second, empirical research on the lived experiences of Afghan migrants in Pakistan, particularly regarding their access to healthcare, education, and legal rights, will provide valuable insights into the gaps in migrant protection. Finally, research into the role of technology in border management should continue, with a focus on balancing security needs with privacy rights and humanitarian obligations.

9.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Afghanistan and Pakistan should strengthen bilateral agreements to ensure better border management, cooperation on security, and protection of migrant rights.
2. Pakistan should develop clearer legal pathways for Afghan refugees, granting them temporary legal status to access essential services and reduce vulnerabilities.

3. The international community, including the UNHCR and NGOs, should continue providing humanitarian assistance and advocate for the protection of migrant rights at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.
4. Both countries should leverage technological advancements to enhance border security while ensuring that migrants' human rights are not violated.
5. Cooperation with neighboring countries, including Iran and China, is crucial for addressing the broader regional migration dynamics and ensuring border stability.

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