



## **Case Study:** **How Access Constraints are Impacting Protection in Afghanistan**

The power shift in August 2021 in Afghanistan has resulted in improvements in the overall security situation and has meant improved access for humanitarian organisations to some remote areas that were previously inaccessible. However, these changes have not reflected an improved quality or degree of access more broadly. The institutional and legal changes imposed by the de facto authorities, including for instance, the closing of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, together with the economic crisis, have dismantled basic services previously available to the population. Protection-focused services have been particularly impacted with, for example, access to justice, civil documentation and gender-based violence services no longer available through state systems. The imposition of restrictions on the participation and movement of female staff by the de facto authorities is another example of policy-induced access constraints impacting the ability of protection actors to provide safe and confidential services, with particular impacts for women and girls. The lack of clarity on how to engage with local de facto authorities is compounded by the fear among agency staff of sharing information with or explaining to de facto authorities what they do and especially, what protection services they provide, making acceptance and negotiation efforts on protection very challenging.