UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #3

ARREST AND DETENTION   FLOW MONITORING (15 September – 28 October 2023)

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency   IOM UN MIGRATION

INTRODUCTION

In response to the Ministry of Interior's (MOI) decision of 26 September 2023 to enact an "*Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan*", UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and IOM, the UN Migration Agency, have collated their data on the arrest, detention, and deportation of Proof of Registration (PoR) holders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and undocumented Afghan nationals as well as on the outflows of Afghan nationals at the Torkham and Chaman border crossing point, to better understand the protection environment and movements of Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan.

CHRONOLOGY

26 September 2023

"*Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan*" issued internally by MoI, outlining the "repatriation" of Afghan nationals in three phases, starting with undocumented Afghan nationals, followed by ACC holders, and PoR holders.

3 October 2023

Formal announcement by MoI of the deadline of 1 November 2023 for all "illegal foreigners" to leave Pakistan.

7 October 2023

Joint statement issued by UNHCR and IOM urging the Government of Pakistan to maintain the protection space for Afghan nationals in need of safety.

10 October 2023

Government-wide circular issued by the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) under the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), stating that PoR and ACC holders can only be repatriated on a voluntary basis.
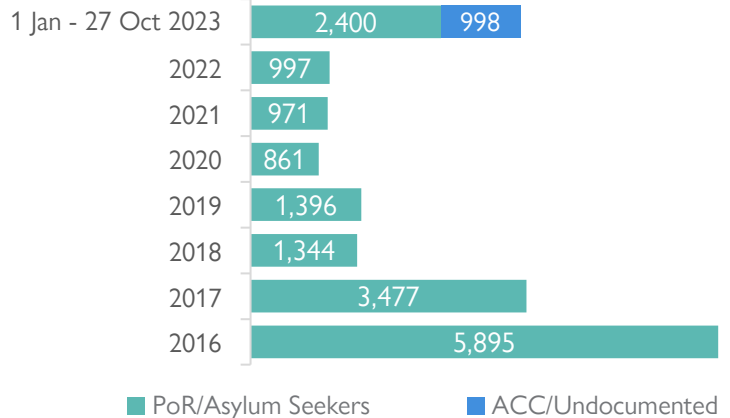
9 and 16 October 2023

Provincial-wide circular issued by the Home Departments of Balochistan and Sindh, stating that PoR and ACC holders can only be repatriated on a voluntary basis.

17 October 2023

Press release issued by UN Special Rapporteurs, urging the Government of Pakistan to stop planned mass deportation of Afghan nationals in Pakistan.

ARREST AND DETENTION BY YEARS

Year	PoR/Asylum Seekers	ACC/Undocumented
1 Jan - 27 Oct 2023	2,400	998
2022	997	
2021	971	
2020	861	
2019	1,396	
2018	1,344	
2017	3,477	
2016	5,895	

■ PoR/Asylum Seekers   ■ ACC/Undocumented

% OF ARRESTS BY LOCATION 1 – 27 OCTOBER 2023

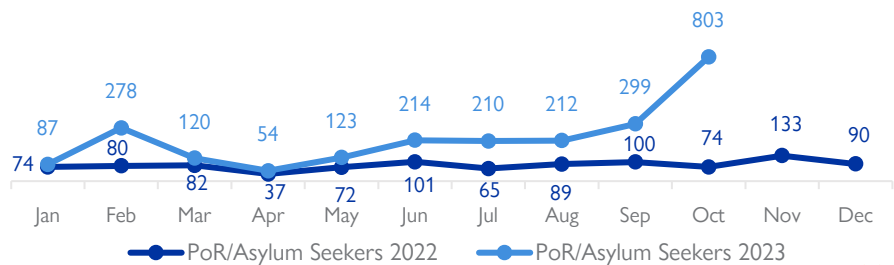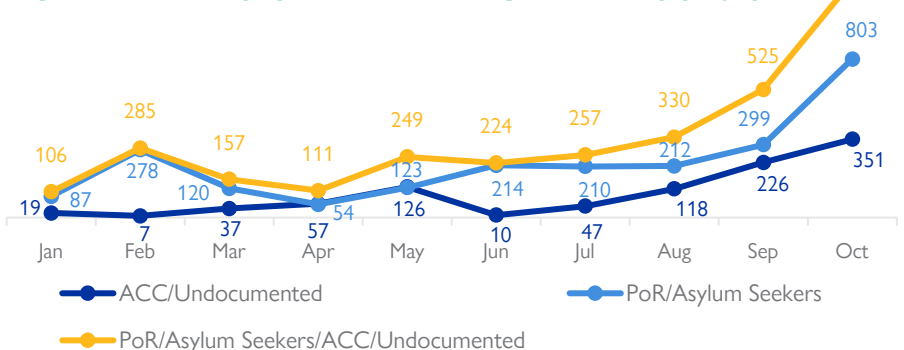| Location	%
Balochistan	41%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	22%
Punjab	19%
Sindh	11%
Islamabad/AJK	7%

KEY FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals. Since January 2023, IOM has started to collect this data, which should be considered indicative at this point. The figures, particularly of undocumented Afghan nationals, should be considered underreported.

- In comparing the rate of arrest and detention of PoR holders, as collected by UNHCR, for the months of October 2022 and October 2023, the rate has increased by almost eleven-fold.
- Since the issuance of the "plan", the rate of arrest has been highest in the province of Balochistan, making up nearly half of all arrests in Pakistan.

MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION TRENDS 2022 – 2023 (PoR HOLDERS)

PoR/Asylum Seekers 2023: Jan 87, Feb 278, Mar 120, Apr 54, May 123, Jun 214, Jul 210, Aug 212, Sep 299, Oct 803

PoR/Asylum Seekers 2022: Jan 74, Feb 80, Mar 82, Apr 37, May 72, Jun 101, Jul 65, Aug 89, Sep 100, Oct 74, Nov 133, Dec 90

—●— PoR/Asylum Seekers 2022   —●— PoR/Asylum Seekers 2023

MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION ANALYSIS 2023

PoR/Asylum Seekers/ACC/Undocumented: Jan 106, Feb 285, Mar 157, Apr 111, May 249, Jun 224, Jul 257, Aug 330, Sep 525, Oct 1,154

PoR/Asylum Seekers: Jan 87, Feb 278, Mar 120, Apr 54, May 123, Jun 214, Jul 210, Aug 212, Sep 299, Oct 803

ACC/Undocumented: Jan 19, Feb 7, Mar 37, Apr 57, May 126, Jun 10, Jul 47, Aug 118, Sep 226, Oct 351

—●— ACC/Undocumented   —●— PoR/Asylum Seekers
—●— PoR/Asylum Seekers/ACC/Undocumented

Fear of arrest continues to be reported as the main driver for return, with the number of Afghans approaching border crossings soaring this week. [UNHCR 2023]

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UNHCR — The UN Refugee Agency   IOM — UN MIGRATION

ARREST AND DETENTION   FLOW MONITORING (15 September – 28 October 2023)

Intensifying outflow of Afghan families and individuals at the Torkham border. [IOM Pakistan 2023]

KEY FINDINGS

- During the past seven days, UNHCR and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimate 36,914 Afghans returned through the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points to Afghanistan. This constitutes an increase of 13,488 (57%) returnees week-on-week in comparison to the second flash update. Cumulatively, since 15 September, 120,182 individuals have returned, the majority (97%) doing so spontaneously.

- Most of the returnees were undocumented Afghans (96%), followed by ACC holders (2%) and PoR holders (2%).

- Fear of arrest (86%) was the most common reason among returnees to return to Afghanistan.

- Returnees were most likely to return from Punjab (36%) in Pakistan and intend to go to Nangarhar (28%), Kabul (23%) and Kandahar (17%) in Afghanistan.

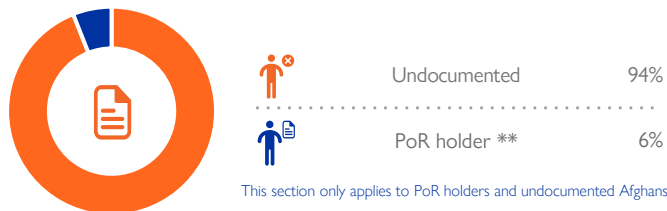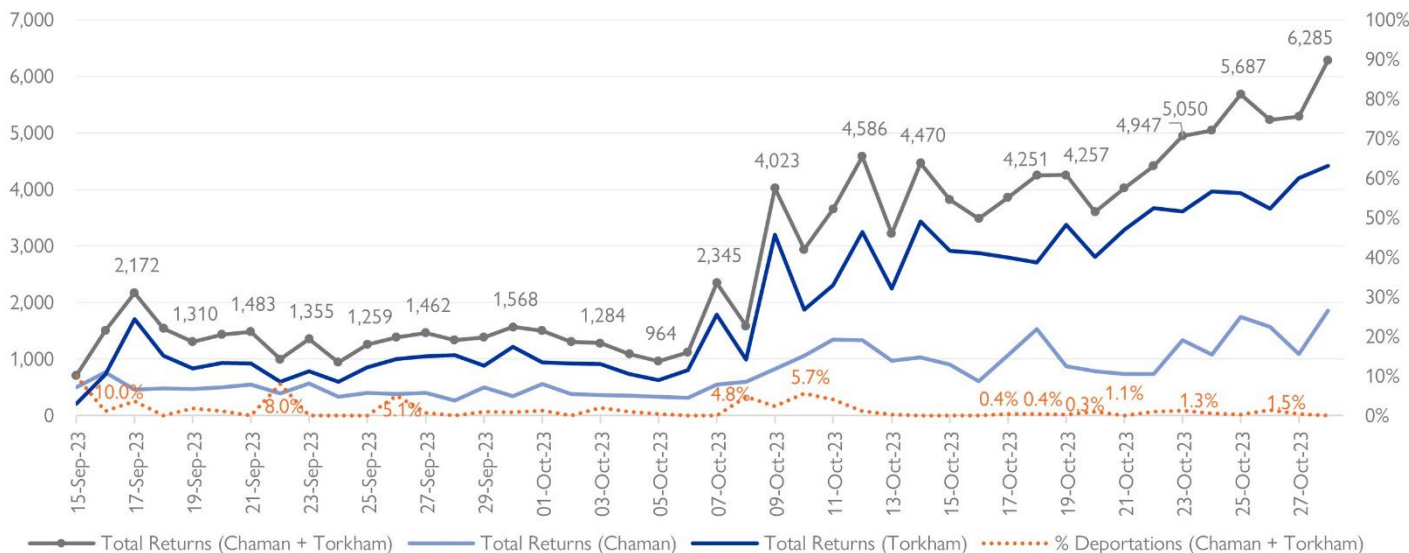| 120,182 (100%) TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNS	116,261 (97%) TOTAL SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES	2,565 (2%)* TOTAL FACILITATED PoR RETURNEES	1,356 (1%) TOTAL DEPORTATIONS

DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES

Undocumented	96%
ACC holder	2%
PoR holder **	2%

DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL DEPORTEES

Undocumented	94%
PoR holder **	6%

This section only applies to PoR holders and undocumented Afghans.

TOTAL RETURNS AND % DEPORTATIONS | TORKHAM AND CHAMAN | 15 SEPTEMBER – 28 OCTOBER 2023

Legend: Total Returns (Chaman + Torkham) — Total Returns (Chaman) — Total Returns (Torkham) — % Deportations (Chaman + Torkham)

This section only applies to ACC holders and undocumented Afghans

PUSH FACTORS (Multiple answers, N = 5,920, can exceed 100%)

Fear of arrest	86%
No employment	41%
Unable to pay house rent	20%
Unable to pay house utilities	20%
Communal pressure to return	19%
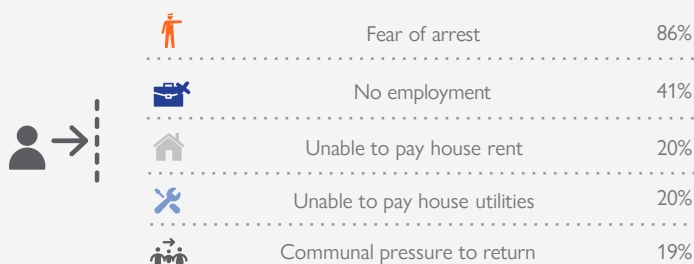
ORIGIN AND INTENDED DESTINATION (TOP 5, BY PROVINCE)

PROVINCE OF ORIGIN		PROVINCE OF DESTINATION	
1. Punjab	36%	1. Nangarhar	28%
2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	26%	2. Kabul	23%
3. Balochistan	19%	3. Kandahar	17%
4. Sindh	11%	4. Kunduz	6%
5. Islamabad Capital Territory	5%	5. Kunar	4%