UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | CORE

PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN

Returns Emergency Response

as of 21 December 2023

Key figures

478,800 total returns[1]

24,300 assisted VolRep

29,000 deportations

309,000	20,000	27,600
65%	82%	95%

The **blue figures** above correspond to the period 15 September to 21 December, while the **navy figures** refer only to those who arrived from 1 November to 21 December.

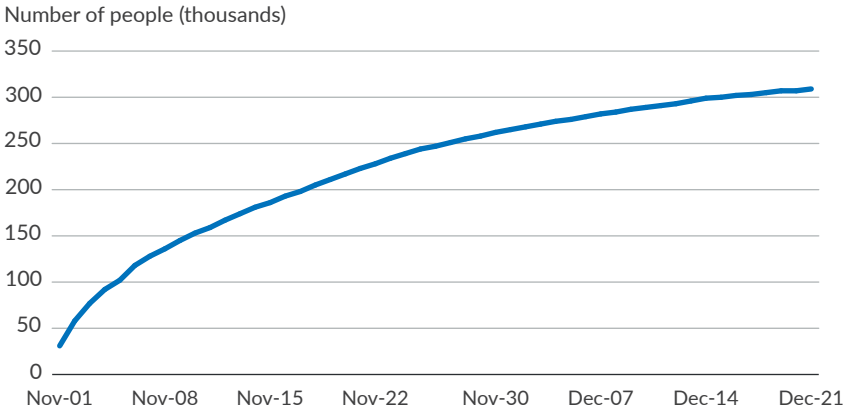
Context

On 3 October, Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsed a plan to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, largely Afghans, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November.

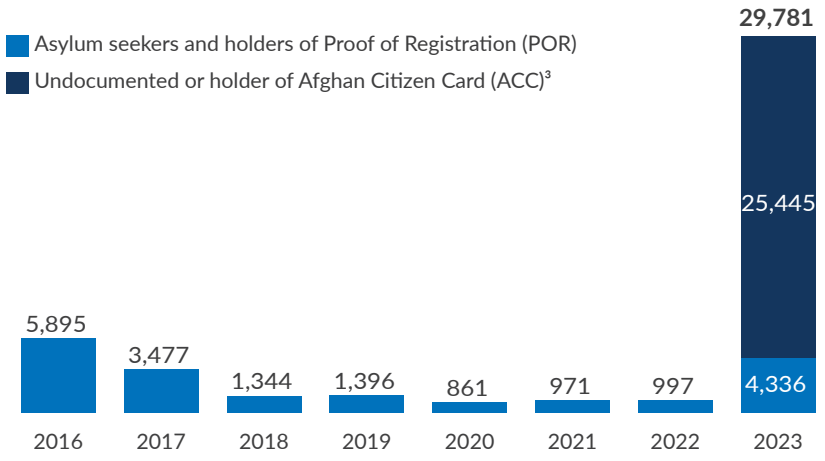
Since 15 September, some 478,800 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan. In December, thus far 3,100 deportations have been registered, compared to some 24,500 deportations in November and 960 in October. Most movements took place through Torkham and Spin Boldak-Chaman official borders, although Badini, Ghulam Khan and Bahramcha are also being used.

As of 16 December, over 29,000 individuals have been arrested/detained in 2023. This represents a nine-fold increase in arrests/detentions as compared to the 2023 total as of the end of October.

Total returns (cumulative since 1 Nov. 2023)[2]

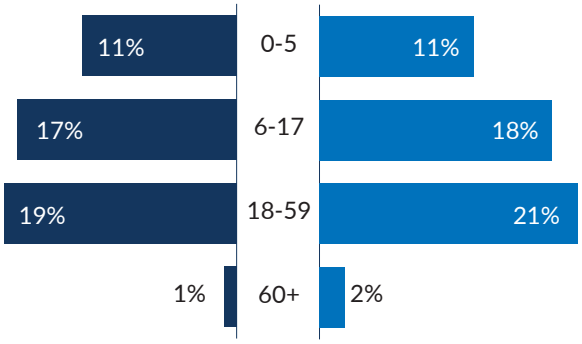


Arrests and detentions (from 2016 up to 16 Dec. 2023)



Returns assisted by UNHCR
by Demographic profile

48% of assisted are **Women** | **52%** of assisted are **Men**



Gender breakdown of head of households

29% are **Women** | **71%** are **Men**

Situation map

[1] *An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented.*
[2] *Return figures from 16 December onwards may fluctuate till validation process is concluded.*
[3] *Prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals.*

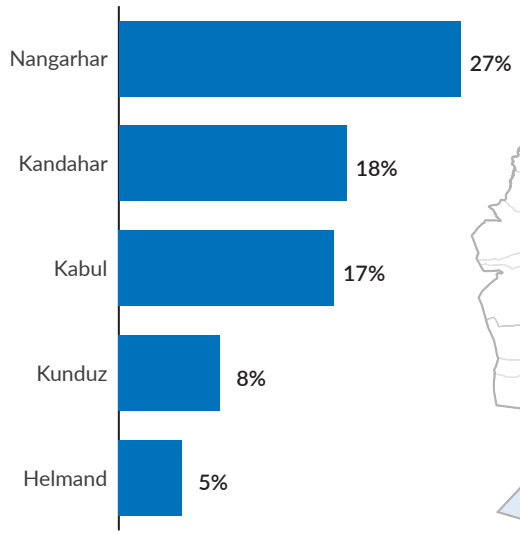
Sources: UNHCR, IOM

Returns assisted by UNHCR

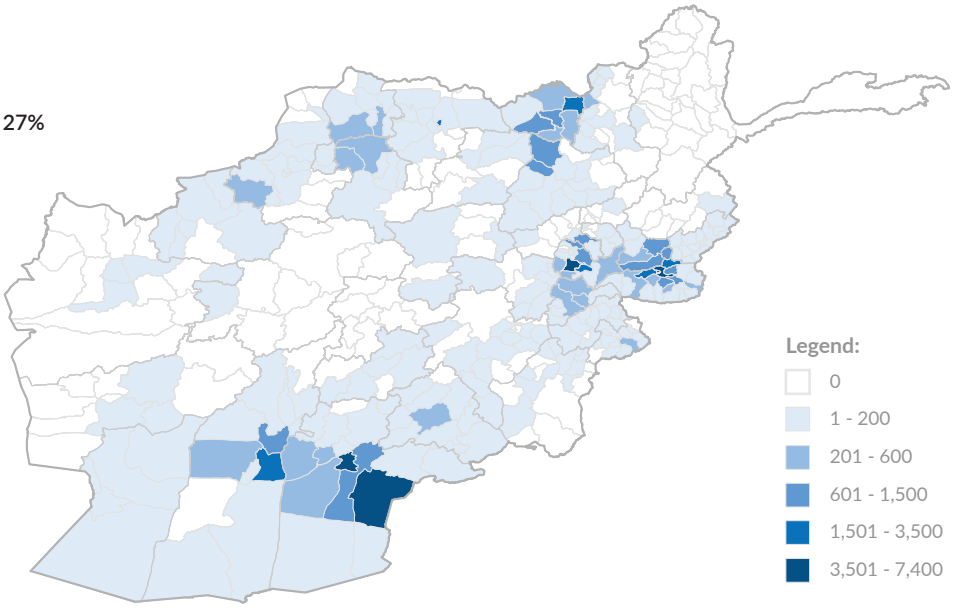
In Afghanistan, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other Protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 61,600 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad Encashment centres, including some 41,700 PoR cardholders. Out of the assisted, some 3% are individuals with disabilities and over 2,300 PoR card holders, UNHCR slip holders and Asylum certificate holders were deported.

One in four households assisted are headed by women. 35% of them intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Lashkargah and Mazar-e-Sharif).

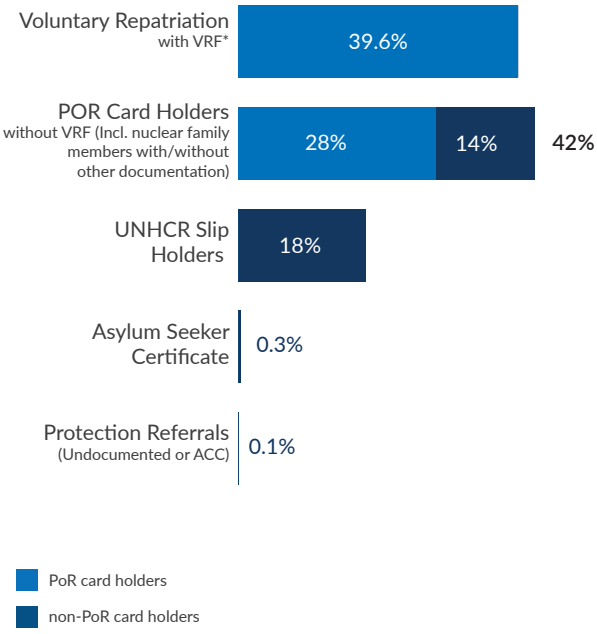
Top 5 provinces of intended destination



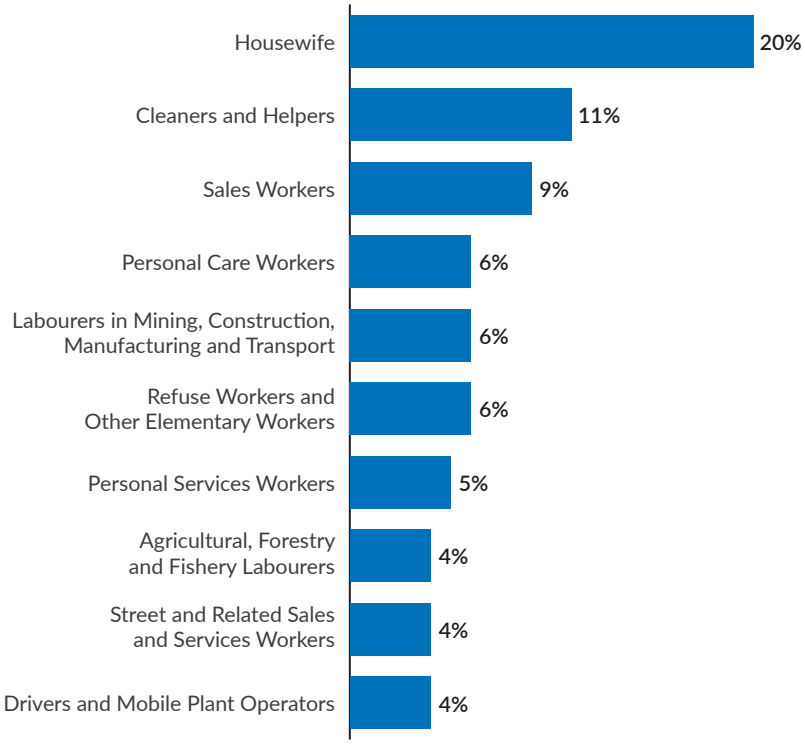
Intended districts of destination



Documentation status



Top 10 occupation of the head of households



** Voluntary Repatriation Form.*

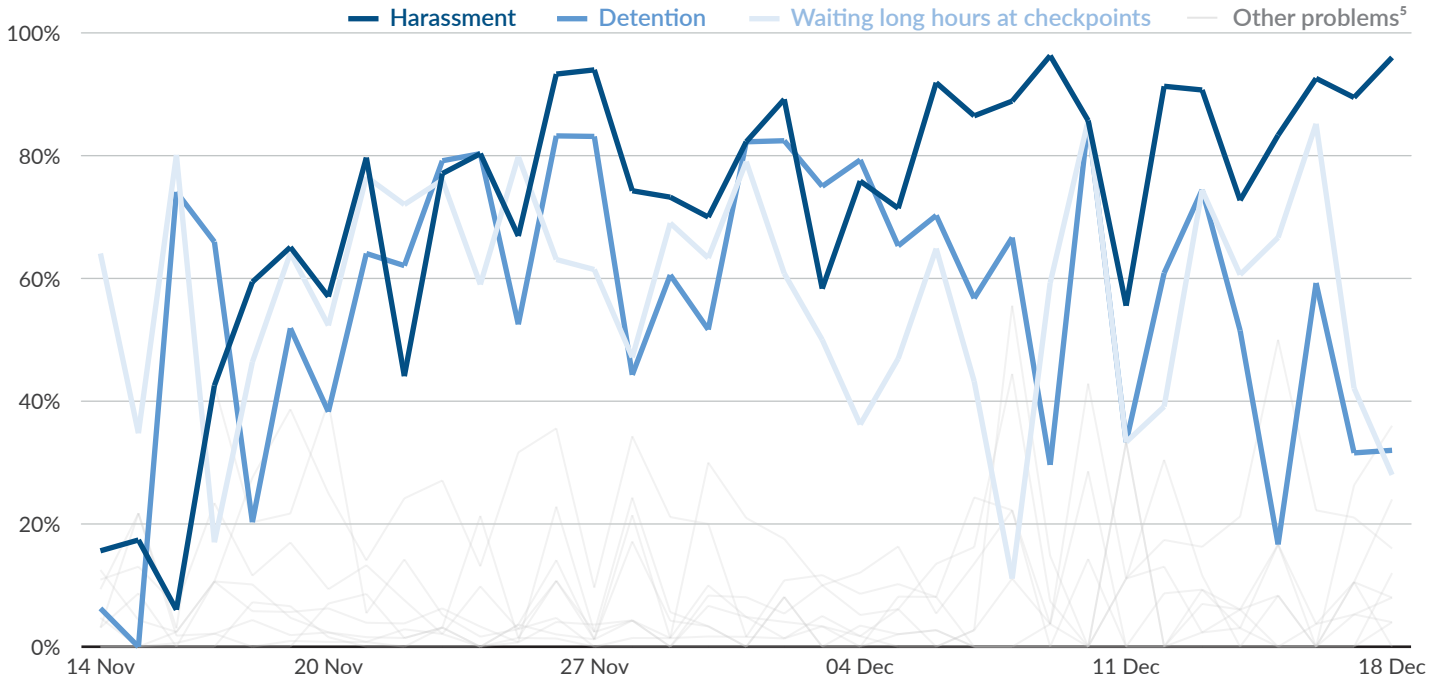
Border Protection Monitoring

UNHCR and its partner Wadan in Afghanistan have scaled up protection activities at the border. Daily presence consists of Border Protection monitoring through interviews with returnees including deportees in order to identify protection concerns and risks, as well as, their intended areas of return in Afghanistan. Five help desks have been set up in order to boost protection screening interviews, identification and referral of individuals to be assisted by UNHCR.

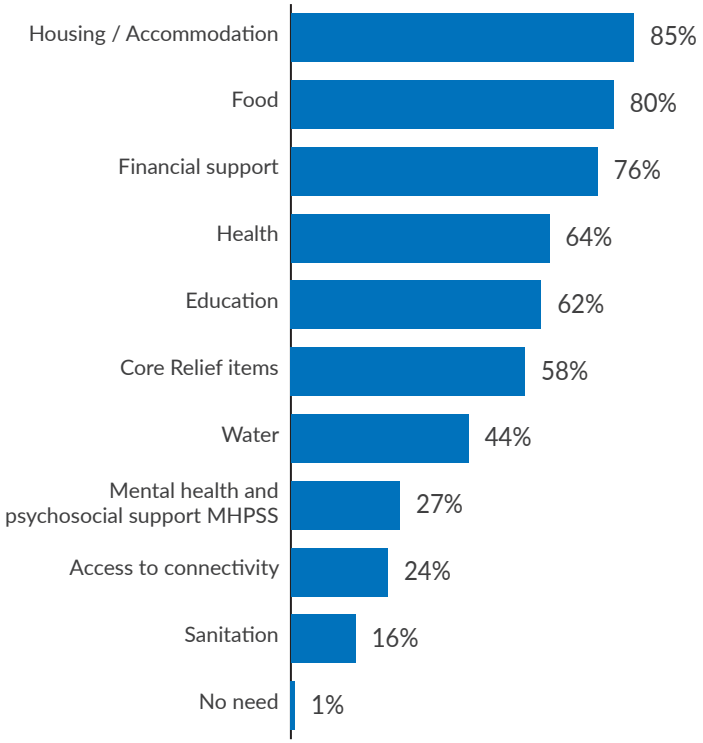
Since 12 November, the most reported problems experienced prior to the cross-border movement have consistently been harassment, waiting long hours at checkpoints and detention. On the contrary, interrogations has continued to be the least reported issue.

Problems experienced in Pakistan prior to the cross-border movement[4]

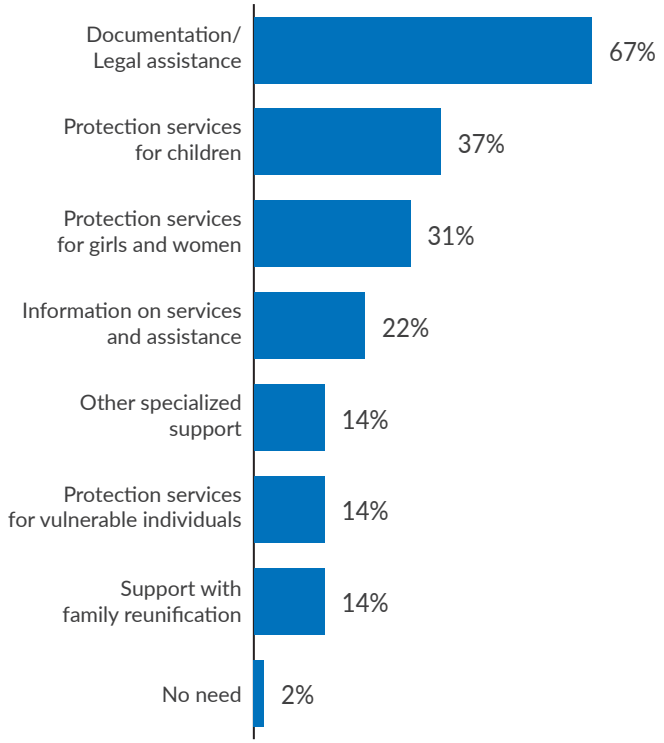
Percentage interviews per day reporting problems



Needs upon arrival in final destination[4]



Protection services required in final destination[4]



[4] *Multiple choice questions, may add up to over 100%.*

[5] *Other problems include: confiscation of documents, money extorsion, family separation, interrogations, lease not extended, not being allowed to cross with property or livestock, paid bribe to pass police checkpoints, physical abuse and security incident.*