

Afghanistan

June 2024

UNHCR has assisted **99,355** Afghan returnees from Pakistan, including **61,350** Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders since September 2023.

Since 15 September, over **639,000** Afghans have returned to Afghanistan, of which over **148,000** have returned in 2024. The last two weeks saw the overall reported rate of arrest and detention decrease by approximately 13 per cent, compared to the previous two weeks.

Returns have been steadily increasing since March. In June, **5,964** returnees assisted by UNHCR. This shows an increase compared to April (**2,872**) and a decrease compared to May (**7,389**).

KEY INDICATORS

335,425

Individuals directly supported by UNHCR, receiving protection, cash, and in-kind assistance.

55%

of all individuals assisted in June are women and girls.

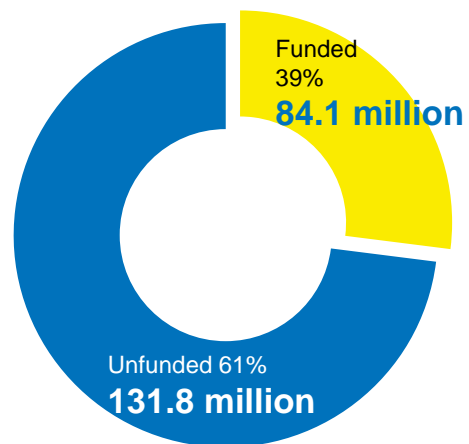
274,064

Individuals participated in assessments and monitoring exercises meant to understand gaps and inform targeted assistance.

FUNDING (AS OF 30 JUNE 2024)

USD 215.9 million

requested for Afghanistan



A flood-affected family received UNHCR assistance in Baghlan, Afghanistan. © Faramarz Barzin/UNHCR

Update On Achievements

Operational Context

Afghanistan continues to host an estimated 3.22 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), 1.46 million IDP returnees, 34,905 assisted refugee returnees¹ who returned in 2024 and around 35,000 refugees², requiring both immediate protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as medium to longer term support. The country continues to grapple with multiple humanitarian crises, deteriorating human rights, especially for girls and women, economic instability, and severe climate shocks. In 2024, an estimated 23.7 million people – more than half of Afghanistan’s population – are projected to require humanitarian assistance³. The political uncertainty in Afghanistan reverberates across the region, demanding sustained attention and humanitarian efforts.

Achievements

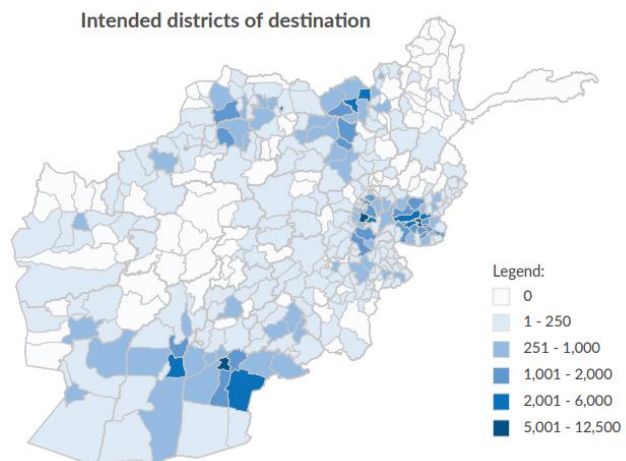


PROTECTION

UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Update: UNHCR has assisted a total of 34,905 individuals (16,963 females and 17,942 males), including 5,964 (3,057 females and 2,907 males) in June alone, in refugee or refugee-like situations returned to Afghanistan since 1 January 2024. Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) holders, Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders, UNHCR Slip holders, UNHCR Certificate holders, and undocumented family members have made up the majority of returns from Pakistan. The number of returnees (in refugee or refugee-like situations) in June 2024 has increased compared to February (4,066), March (2,009), and April (2,872), and witnessed a decrease compared to May (7,389).

Around 48% of the UNHCR assisted returnees are women and girls. Out of all returnees assisted, 2.5% have disabilities, and at least 29% are headed by women. Some 33% of intend to return to five provincial capitals, including Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Lashkargah and Mazar-e-Sharif.

A total of 1,435 (924 males and 511 females) interviews, including 315 in June, were conducted by UNHCR protection teams with newly arrived returnees in 2024 as part of return/protection monitoring activities. Based on the returnee monitoring findings, the primary reasons of return continue to be linked with protection reasons, including fear of arrest and/or deportation, alleged abuse by police or state authorities, concerns related to the PoR card validity and uncertainty related to its extension, concerns related to night raids, and strict border entry requirements, which limits the ability to commute to Afghanistan for temporary reasons. However, many returnees who arrived in June



¹ Since 2002, UNHCR has assisted over 5.3 m refugee returnees.

² Afghanistan Operational Data Portal

³ Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan

reported that recently the level of protection issues faced by Afghans, including refugees (i.e., police harassment, arrest, extortion, night raids, announcements through the mosques addressed to Afghans to leave Pakistan, and difficulties to extend lease agreements with landlords) have been reduced, except in Punjab, Sindh, and some locations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Refugee returnees interviewed at Encashment Centers (ECs) continue to share concerns about the possible implementation of the second phase of the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP) by the Pakistan Government and related implications, including increased risks of verbal and physical harassment, arrests, and night raids.



Aslam Khan, a returnee from Pakistan at the Kabul Encashment Center. ©UNHCR/Faramarz Barzin

Border Monitoring - Refoulement/Deportations: A total of 639,000 Afghans returned from Pakistan since 15 September 2023, primarily through the Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossings. The majority arrived in November 2023, following Pakistan's announcement of the IFRP in October 2023, setting a deadline of 1 November 2023 for undocumented foreigners to leave the country.

In June 2024, UNHCR conducted 11,382 household/individual level protection border monitoring interviews (inflow and outflow) with Afghans at eight official crossing points with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. During the same period, a total of 38 interviews were conducted at unofficial crossing points. Between 1 January to 30 June 2024, a total of 67,129 inflow and outflow monitoring interviews were conducted at eight official crossing points and 461 interviews at around 50 unofficial crossing points. During 2024, an estimated 390,000 Afghan passport holders departed for Iran via Islam Qala and Zaranj, including an estimated 65,500 individuals during June.

Between 1 January and 30 June 2024, an estimated 416,100 individuals travelled to Pakistan via Torkham (345,000) and Spin Boldak (71,100) and 450,000 returned via Torkham (350,300) and Spin Boldak (99,700) to Afghanistan. In the past years, the majority of the in/outflow movements were reported via Spin Boldak. According to local authorities, the Angor Ada crossing point (in Paktika province) has been closed to all movements, including commercial activities reportedly due to protests by Waziristan residents on the Pakistan side. Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities, at the

Dand-aw-Patan (in Paktia province) crossing point, implemented rigorous restrictions on all forms of movements, except for commercial activities. Afghan pedestrians, including those seeking medical treatment can cross into Pakistan if they possess valid passport and visa. In Ghulam Khan (in Khost province) crossing point, the de-facto Authorities (DfA) border officials have observed ongoing cross-border movements despite the current restrictions (by Pakistani authorities) to present valid passports and visas.

UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance, reaching a total of 4,917 families (including 483 families in June), composed of 21,021 persons (1,457 individuals in June), compelled to return from Pakistan in 2024. The categories include Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum-seeker certificate holders, and other protection referrals.⁴ Based on the protection/border monitoring information, UNHCR observed that the number of people compelled to return has been declining since April 2024, which could be due to the advocacy efforts carried out by UNHCR offices in Pakistan as well as no attempts, as of end June, by the government of Pakistan to implement the second phase of IFRP.

UNHCR's mixed-gender teams are stationed at the Spin Boldak and Torkham border crossing points, conducting protection interviews with new Afghan arrivals from Pakistan, including women returnees. Help desks are available to identify persons with sensitive protection backgrounds and to conduct referrals to available services, including to the UNHCR protection team for further assessment of protection concerns and needs. Shelter, livelihood, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene were identified as the most critical needs.

Rapid Household Needs Assessments: A total of 16,125 individuals were assessed using the Rapid Household Assessment Form (RHAF) and Community-Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM) in June 2024.

Location of Assessments Conducted

For RHAF assessments, in June, UNHCR completed a total of 1,461 assessments, across 28 districts in 14 provinces of Afghanistan, reaching 11,139 individuals (with children making up over 65% of household members (7,235 individuals). Female-headed households accounted for around 17% of the assessments, with over 48% of these households facing more than one vulnerability.

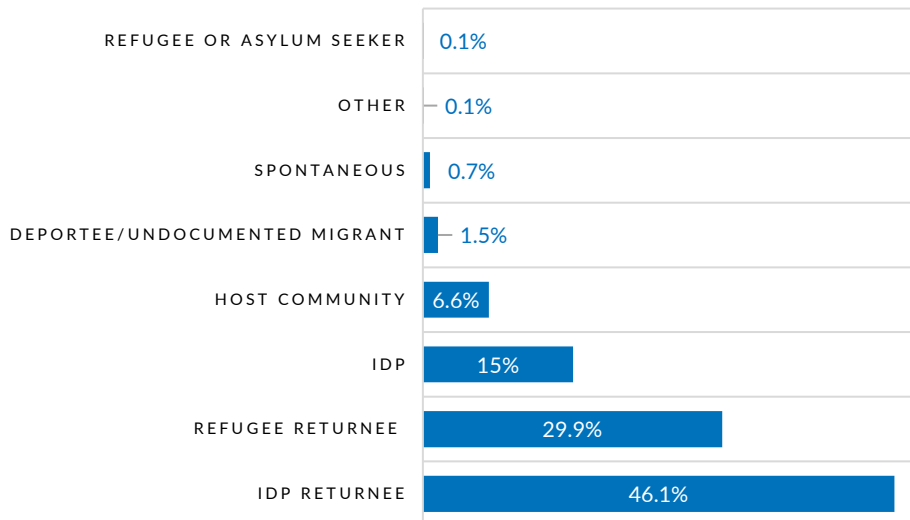


Cash assistance was provided to 69.2% of households assessed in June, 35.9% received food aid, and 10.1% received non-food items.

The RHAF assessments typically encompass a diverse mix of participants from the host community, IDPs, IDP returnees, undocumented migrants, undocumented returnees, asylum seekers and refugee returnees, providing a broad sample for the survey. In June, 46.1% of the returnees assessed were IDP returnees followed by refugee returnees making up 29.9%, and IDPs making up 15% of respondents.

⁴ This only includes the number of returnees assisted through FARE.

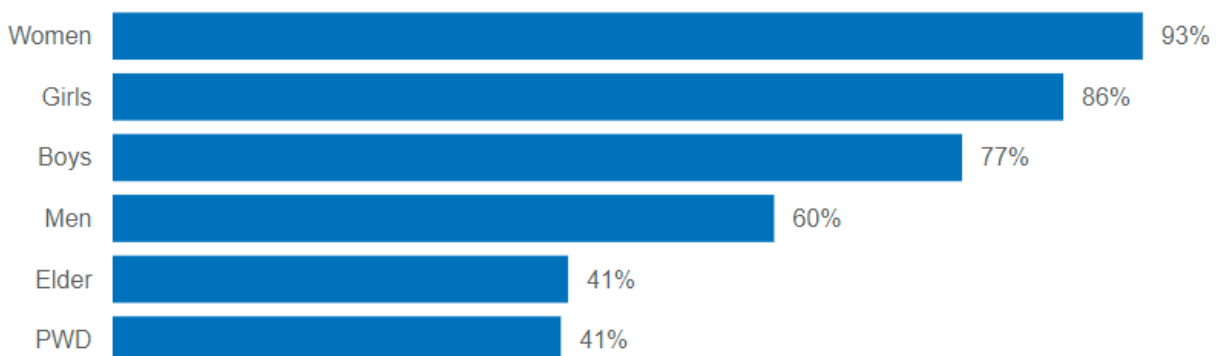
Household Status of the Respondents



Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM): UNHCR used household surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to monitor protection risks and coping mechanisms through its CBPM tool in June 2024. A total of 227 male-headed households and 220 female-headed households were interviewed by UNHCR’s CBPM partners, as part of 447 household assessments, representing 3,129 individuals. Assessments were conducted in 33 districts of 19 provinces to collect household-level data. The assessment data also comprises 202 interviews with 87 male and 115 female key informants in 38 districts of 25 provinces, as well as the information of 332 FGDs conducted with women, men, girls and boys of different age groups and displacement statuses in 54 districts of 27 provinces.

Assessment outcomes found that 68% of the respondents (IDP returnees, host community members, IDPs, refugee returnees, undocumented returnees, and asylum seekers) reported that one of their household members lacked civil documentation, with girls, women and boys identified as the most affected groups, severely limiting their access to basic services including education, governmental institutions, and impairing their freedom of movement. The age group of heads of households assessed includes 35-59 years (57%), 18-34 (33%), 60+ (9%) and 14-17 (2%). Women and girls are also less likely to access legal services, noting barriers related to the costs or unavailability of services. UNHCR has embarked on legal assistance projects across the country to help address this problem.

Which members of your family lack civil documentation?



Of the respondents, 76% mentioned that they or their family members were not able to receive mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) within the last three months with

women/girls amongst the most affected groups. Moreover, 54% reported that they or their family members were not able to receive healthcare services in the last three months. Around 79% reported that they have not received food assistance in the last three months, and 53% that they do not have easy access to safe drinking water. Further, 30% of respondents mentioned that there are places that women and girls do not feel comfortable to visit, including education centers, marketplaces, water points and clinics due to discrimination, harassment and intimidation, lack of IDs, no mahram, safety concerns and cultural barriers.

The findings of the key informant interviews with IDP returnees, host community members, IDPs, returnees, refugee returnees and undocumented returnees reveal significant barriers for accessing services (48%), affecting various vulnerable groups. The top five groups facing challenges to access services are female-headed households (74%), older person-headed households (63%), persons with physical disabilities (57%), child-headed households (51%) and persons with mental disabilities (41%). The respondents mentioned that electricity, health, food assistance, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for adults and children, rehabilitation support for people with disabilities, services for women, rehabilitation services for children, and shelter repair services are not available in their communities.

Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM): In June, UNHCR and partners received a total of 3,695 queries from refugees, IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees and host community members. Country Office Kabul received the highest number at 2,056 (56%), followed by Sub Office Jalalabad at 388 (11%) and Sub Office Kandahar at 147 (4%). This figure is consistent with the average since January, showing a slight decline compared to the initial months of the year, primarily due to the Eid celebration and the fewer cases received via email.

Consistently with the first five months of the year, email was the most commonly used channel of communication in June (1,408 queries), followed by hotlines (1,340) and Community Outreach Volunteers (863). UNHCR is currently expanding the use of the Complaint and Feedback Mechanism to CBPM and RHAF partners, allowing deployed enumerators to collect and register queries in the common system in line with harmonized standard operating procedures. As of 2024, a cumulative total of 31,076 queries has already been recorded, with 70% of queries already closed.

Persons with Specific Needs (PSN): The PSN directory which provides information on the existing services across the country is updated and shared with different coordination forums. The directory facilitates and strengthens swift referrals of PSN cases to the existing services.

During the reporting period, the PSN interventions, including assessments, case reviews, cash assistance, and referrals continue. A total of 465 new assessments were conducted and 636 PSN cases were reviewed by the case approval committee, of which 307 were deemed eligible for cash assistance. Additionally, 347 cases were referred to the PSN network, of which 162 cases received both services (cash assistance and referrals). A total of 181 cases were assisted with cash for protection.

Women Protection: UNHCR and its implementing partners facilitated 14 dialogues, reaching out to 70 female and male community leaders, aiming to engage them in decisions affecting their life. A total of 218 women and girls received support through individual and group counselling to respond to the acute mental health needs of women and girls.

Over 630 women, girls, boys, and men were reached through information sharing activities, empowering the community with the necessary knowledge and skills about overcoming the negative impact of violence and harmful practices on individuals, families and communities. Most importantly, these sessions aim to inform women and girls about available support, encouraging them to seek help and facilitating their safe access to multi-sectoral response services. A total of six women and girls were referred to different specialized services through interagency referral pathways.

UNHCR's Women Community Centers provide a safe space for women and girls to engage in a variety of wellbeing and capacity-building activities, receive information on available services and topics of concern to the community and to seek support through direct interventions by UNHCR partners and referrals. Over 1,080 women and girls have attended UNHCR's centers in June.

Child Protection: In June 2024, UNHCR and its partners successfully conducted awareness-raising sessions on child protection topics, including self-protection from dangers and injuries, dealing with psychological distress, the importance of education and hygiene, and child participation, engaging a broad segment of community members, with significant participation from women and persons with disabilities. A total of 2,068 individuals attended these essential sessions in Kandahar, Herat and Bamyan. Additionally, 45 new cases of children facing unique child protection risks were identified and registered for case management services. Moreover, 1,384 children benefited from psychosocial support and recreational activities in Child-Friendly Spaces (CFSs) or during after-school programs.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS): In June 2024, a total of 12,657 community members, including 4,954 women, 4,994 men, 1,114 girls, and 1,595 attended several MHPSS activities, including:

Non-focused Specialized Services: A total of 1,300 individuals received one-on-one psychosocial counselling services. These services are based on scalable brief psychological interventions, endorsed in Afghanistan.

Community and Family Support:

- Group psychosocial interventions were provided to affected populations through UNHCR implementing partners. A total of 2,742 individuals attended these activities.
- A total of 46 individuals received family-based interventions in the form of psychosocial sessions. These sessions aimed at providing emotional support, active listening, and linking individuals to available services.

Psychoeducation: Psychoeducation and service orientation sessions were provided to community members. A total of 8,569 individuals attended these sessions, which aimed to orient community members on mental health and psychosocial problems and available services.

Capacity Building: UNHCR did its regular supervision and coaching sessions with implementing partners in 19 provinces. These sessions are conducted in the local language, aiming to provide a layer of support with healing plans developed for community members and it is a reflection forum to the psychosocial counselors.

Legal Assistance: The legal assistance project is currently ongoing in Gardez, Herat, Kunduz and Kandahar. In June, some 144 legal awareness sessions were facilitated by partners, reaching 2,240 individuals, including refugees, IDPs, IDP returnees and host community members. While a total of 318 persons received legal counselling, 319 individuals accessed legal aid. The sessions addressed the importance of legal documents to access a wide range of services and provided practical guidance on documentation procedures in Afghanistan. As a result of this legal assistance, a total of 1,376 documents were issued, including Tazkiras and birth certificates.

**SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS**

The construction of 800 earthquake-resilient shelters through CBI modality is ongoing in Giyan, Paktika province, and 158 earthquake resilient shelters are planned for implementation in Herat province. Earthquake resilient shelter provision in the Western region will target beneficiaries affected by the Herat earthquakes in October 2023, with beneficiary selection processes currently ongoing.

Out of 2,740 permanent shelters planned for 2024, a total of 438 shelters (150 in Kandahar, 96 in Balkh, 139 in Kunduz, 22 in Bamyan and 31 in Kabul) are in progress, while other provinces are initiating construction activities. The selection of beneficiaries has been completed for 1,624 households, based on vulnerability criteria. Major repairs for 647 out of 747 shelters in Baghlan, Kunduz, and Herat provinces has been completed as of June 2024. This brings a total progress of major repairs to 87% by the end of June 2024.

**CBI**

UNHCR provided cash assistance to 6,153 people in June 2024 through various CBI programs, including FARE, VolRep and PSN assistance. The assistance, which covered a wide range of services, has also supported families to reintegrate, address protection as well as other lifesaving concerns, and contributed to durable solutions. UNHCR continues to provide cash assistance to refugees and persons in refugee-like situations to assist families in meeting basic needs and contributing to sustainable reintegration processes. e.

**FLOOD RESPONSE**

The month of May saw heavy flooding across Northeastern, Northern and Western regions of Afghanistan, brought on by unprecedented rain fall. In June, responding actors conducted inter-agency assessments across flood-affected areas to determine humanitarian needs on the ground and to inform response. While the situation has largely stabilized towards the end of June, flash floods events reported in Guzargah district of Baghlan Province on 27 June, affecting two villages and destroying/damaging some 150 homes, underscores pervasive vulnerability to natural disasters and shocks in this region. UNHCR and partners have continued to deliver emergency response to affected communities and maintain preparedness to respond to further events.

In the Northeast, UNHCR provided 619 emergency family tents, 1,115 NFI kits, and 1,898 sets of clothing, across affected districts of Baghlan, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces by end June. In the Northern region, UNHCR has delivered 149 emergency family tents, and 504 NFI kits to affected households in Faryab and Sar-e-Pul provinces; while in the Western region, UNHCR has reached 150 households with emergency family tents, 652 with NFI kits, and 797 with clothing in Ghor province.



UNHCR distributions to the flood-affected people in Ghor, Afghanistan. ©UNHCR/Caroline Gluck

Despite the efforts of the Shelter Cluster and its partners in providing emergency shelter and core relief items to over 7,700 families across the three regions, the lack of resources for long-term support remains a critical issue. Affected families remain in dire need of assistance to repair and rebuild their homes, with more 6,100 families requiring support to repair their homes, and another 3,750 families in need of support to rebuild their homes. An estimated USD 14.6 million is required to support the most vulnerable families and ensure they have safe housing before winter sets in.

Acknowledgments

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

External Relations

CONTACTS

Saorlaith Ni Bhroin, Senior External Relations Officer, Afghanistan
nibhroin@unhcr.org, Tel: +93 70 346 5623

Josephine Karlsson, Reporting Officer, Afghanistan,
karlssok@unhcr.org, Tel: +93 70 246 5664

LINKS

[Data portal](#) – [X \(Twitter\)](#) - [Facebook](#)