


AFGHANISTAN MONTHLY PROTECTION MONITORING SUMMARY

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN


AUGUST 2024






7,826 assessments conducted in August


54,034 persons reached




5% decrease of total assessments compared to July



Conducted across **95 districts** in **32 provinces**



31% of interviewed households are headed by women. Out of the overall household members, **53 %** are female, of which **31 %** are girls. **61 %** are children



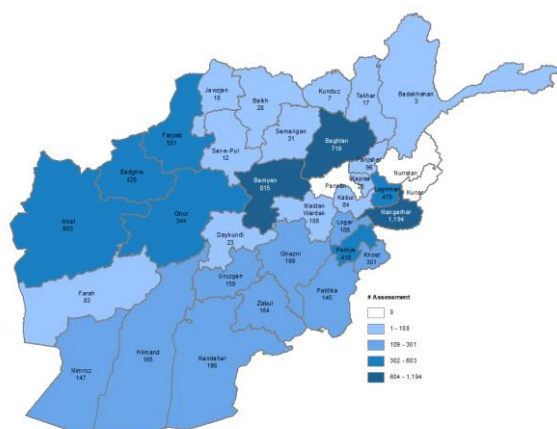
9% heads of households with **disabilities**

Introduction

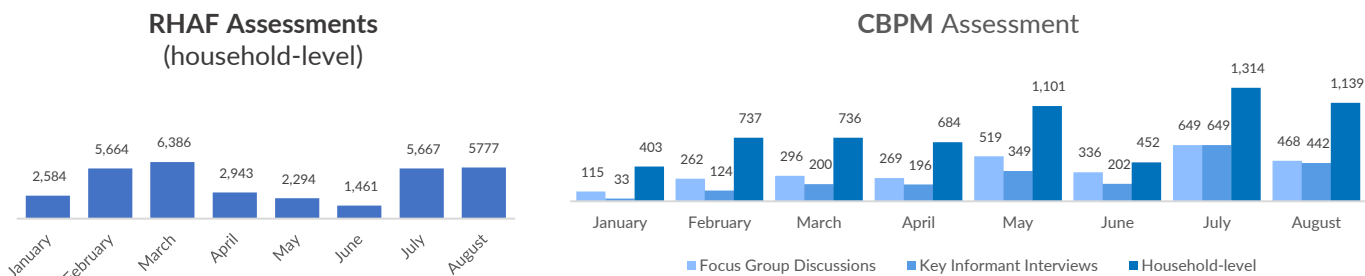
The analysis provided in this report relies on data gathered through UNHCR’s protection monitoring tools. UNHCR’s **Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM)** interventions include household-level assessments, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), aiming to collect evidence-based information on the protection needs and risks of displaced, returnee and host communities. CBPM outcomes inform UNHCR programming and strategic decision making and advocacy, and also feeds into the [Afghanistan Protection Cluster’s analysis](#) and information products. **Rapid multi-sectoral household assessments (RHAF)** aim to identify persons in need of assistance through UNHCR’s protection and assistance programmes and also provide valuable insights into the vulnerabilities of households as well as related protection needs and risks. The selection of areas is based on the high density of displaced and returnees among communities, including priority areas of return and reintegration and newly accessible areas. UNHCR’s population groups include refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees, refugees and asylum seekers and members of the host communities.

KEY POINTS

- **Women and girls** continue to face significant challenges in accessing basic services and assistance, reflecting their systemic discrimination and the movement restrictions imposed.
- **Among the surveyed population in August, 60% of heads of households** reported experiencing one or more forms of vulnerabilities, reflecting a 5% increase compared to July.
- **Food assistance** was the most crucial need highlighted by surveyed households, followed by healthcare.
- **Many families reported having resorted to harmful coping mechanisms**, such as borrowing money, selling assets, or harmful practices that imply serious child protection risks.
- The number of **RHAF and CBPM assessments** has increased by 5% compared to July.

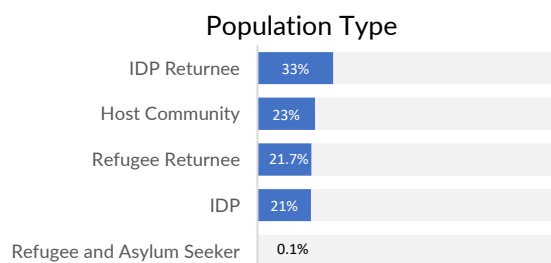


OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTED



UNHCR conducted 7,826 assessments in August 2024, using various tools such as household assessments, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to assess communities' protection needs and risks. Following the surge in assessments in July, the number of assessments has now stabilized at a high level.

- Most interviewed households were IDP returnees, with refugee returnees being the second largest group assessed. This reflects UNHCR's focus on the specific protection issues that Afghans face upon their return.
- Across all assessment modalities, **UNHCR reached 54,034 individuals** in August, primarily women and children. Of all households surveyed, 30% were headed by women, indicating a 1% increase compared with July.
- UNHCR is working closely with all its partners to **ensure the participation of female staff in all activities** and is using various modalities to **capture the voices of women and girls despite the severe restrictions**.



IDENTIFIED VULNERABILITIES



60% with vulnerabilities



54% experienced stress affecting their day-to-day life



9% heads of households with disabilities

- According to the RHAf survey conducted in August, **60% of the heads of households have some form of vulnerability**, among them female headed households, women at risk, children at risk, persons with life threatening health issues, single male headed households, and older persons at risk. These findings are supported by the CBPM household assessments, which also point to 8% of the households surveyed being headed by widows (showing a decrease of 5% from the previous month) and 8% by older persons or children (the same as previous month).
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in August, **54% of respondents indicated that they or their family members had experienced feelings of stress that affected their day-to-day life**. Despite a 7% decrease from the previous month, the data still points to a very high prevalence of MHPSS issues among the surveyed population. The main stressors identified were lack of employment and severe economic hardship, food insecurity and unavailability or lack of access to services, alongside physical health problems, children dropping out of school, child labor, armed conflict, denied access to education, forced marriage, family violence, community tension, denial of services and opportunities (excluding education) and physical and emotional abuse in the family. Furthermore, **39% of the respondents indicated that they had observed behavioral changes** in the household (a decrease of 6%

from the previous month), which included family members appearing sad and stressed, a loss of appetite, aggressiveness, self-isolation, and thoughts of self-harm and suicidal tendencies.

- Vulnerabilities were also high among household members, pointing to the **multi-faceted protection risks that Afghan families face**. The main vulnerabilities observed under the RHAF include children at risk (25%), women at risk (23%), pregnant and breastfeeding women (20%), persons with disabilities (11%), persons with life threatening health issues (9.5%), and older persons at risk (6%). In addition, CBPM data also points to high rates of school dropouts (34%) among surveyed families due to a lack of financial support by families and the engagement of children in child labor. Life-threatening health issues (30%), age (9%), and legal protection and security needs (6%), are among other risks and vulnerabilities pointed out by the CBPM respondents. **CBPM monitors have also observed tension or violence in 20% of the households** affecting predominantly children (52%), women (34%), older persons (9%) as well as persons with disabilities (5%).

SAFETY & FREEDOM



40% mentioned community areas **off-limits for women and girls**.

- **40 % of the heads of households indicated that there are places in the community that women and girls cannot access**, highlighting the severe restrictions to their freedom of movement and participation in public life.
- The **main places that women and girls cannot go to** include education facilities, markets, clinics, water points, and latrines.
- The **main reasons for movement limitations** include discrimination, harassment and intimidations in public areas, lack of identity and civil documents, mahram requirements and safety concerns related to debts and social and cultural barriers.

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION



63% reported lack of **civil documentation**



50% reported barriers **accessing legal services**

- Around **63% of all households surveyed have members who need civil documentation. Women and children are by far the most affected population groups. Undocumented returnees and refugee returnees display significantly higher rates (68% respectively)**. Considering the civil documentation needs reported for Afghan returnees from Pakistan, this trend will be closely observed over the following months.
- The **primary documents missing are** e-Tazkera, followed by passport, paper Tazkera, marriage certificates, birth certificates, and other certificates. The main reason is that these documents were never obtained, the households interviewed lack knowledge about the procedures, the destruction of the documents, lack of knowledge about the importance of these documents as well as denial by family members.
- The **CBPM survey conducted in August** indicates that legal assistance projects were more effectively implemented and reached more people compared to the last two months. The trend in CBPM assessments shows a 13% decrease in barriers faced by respondents in accessing legal assistance, including civil documentation and HLP, compared to July. Unavailability of services, high costs, lack of

information on services, mahram requirements, lack of identity documentation, lack of support by family members and transportation limitations affected women and girls the most.

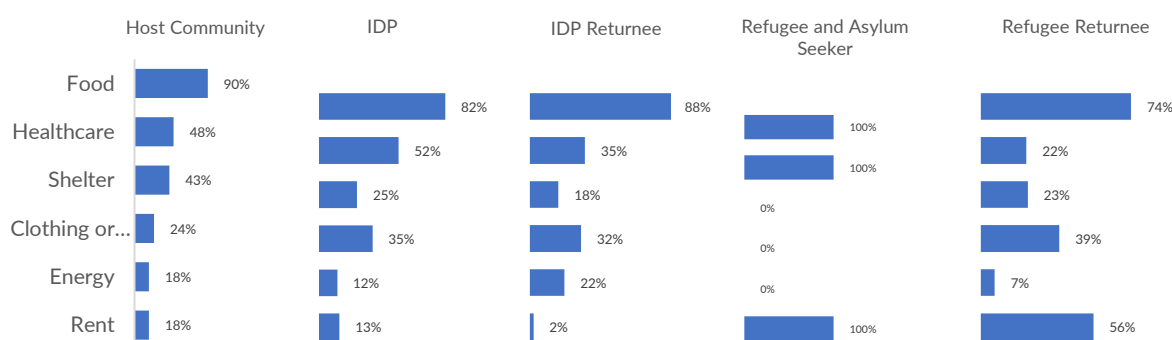
- The **impact of not having documentation is drastic**, with two-thirds of the respondents indicating that it prevents them from accessing basic services. It is also a barrier to accessing education and governmental or humanitarian assistance and contributes to movement restrictions and property ownership disputes.

NEEDS PRIORITIZATION, ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED



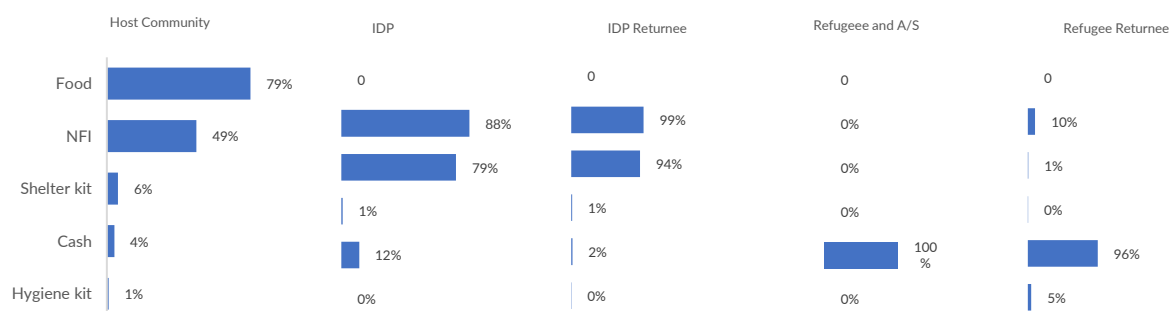
87% mentioned food as the most pressing need

Top Needs



- **Food assistance** was the most crucial need prioritized by households surveyed under the RHAF, followed by health services, shelter, clothing/NFI, productive assets to run a small business, rent, energy and fuel. Despite the assistance provided, 63% of the surveyed households are still in need of humanitarian assistance.

Assistance Provided



- This is confirmed by the CBPM findings, which show **89% of all households reported being in need of food assistance in the past three months**, mainly due to not being assessed for assistance, lack of knowledge about eligibility criteria and procedures and due the alleged discrimination or exclusion by the community leaders. The percentage is even higher among female respondents (93%) as compared to male heads of household (83%), pointing to the heightened economic vulnerability of women. **Respondents also reported access constraints related to MHPSS services and drinking water**, with 59% and 60% of households needing access to these essential services.

- Refugee returnees and IDP returnees are particularly affected by overcrowded shelters. Other shelter related concerns include damaged shelter, lack of privacy and protective walls and doors, exposure to the natural environment (weather) and exposure to security (due to location).
- Irrespective of the gender of the head of household, **respondents highlighted that women and girls continue to be most affected by access constraints to the most basic services**, reflecting the systemic discrimination and movement restrictions.
- Other main barriers to accessing services include unavailability of services, high costs (including for transportation), lack of information on services as well as lack of documents.

LIVELIHOODS AND COPING STRATEGIES



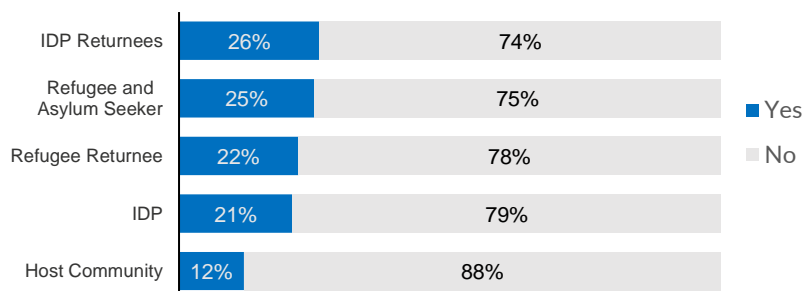
82% reported selling assets to meet vital needs



77% struggled to cover **daily living expenses** (food, rent, and other basic needs)

- Due to financial constraints and high poverty, many families have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms with severe implications that significantly impact women and children. CBPM and RHAF data indicate **that most households borrow money to cope with financial problems**. The prevalence was even higher for refugee and IDP returnees surveyed. The first coping strategy for refugees is sending their children to work. **Other coping mechanisms** identified were selling assets (82% of RHAF respondents and 61% of CBPM respondents have resorted to this measure), child labor, skipping meals or reducing meal sizes, engaging in hazardous work, or family members relocating abroad.
- According to the CBPM findings, a significant number of the surveyed respondents indicated that due to acute poverty and financial reasons, their **families had adopted harmful practices**. These included skipping meals, engaging children in labor including sending them to the neighboring countries to work, migrating abroad, and arranging early marriages for their children to alleviate financial burden. The findings highlight the urgent need to support vulnerable families through integrated programming interventions, including child protection, livelihoods, and community engagement.

Are you able to work and cover your expenses (food, rent etc) on a daily basis?



HOUSEHOLDS EMPLOYMENT STATUS & SOURCE OF INCOME



82% engaged in informal income-generating activities



52% relied on financial support from relatives



60% are unemployed

- According to the RHAF survey conducted in August, **over 60% of households are unemployed, 92% have accrued debts, and 30% rely on daily labor**, with whatever income generated usually spent on essential needs and debt repayment. A total of **77% of the surveyed households were not able to afford daily living expenses** such as providing food, rent, and other basic critical needs.
- The lack of economic opportunities, entrenched poverty, repeated and protracted displacement, and the shrinking protection space have eroded people’s resilience and point to the critical need for livelihood and economic empowerment interventions.



LEADING CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT AND INTENTIONS FOR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION



While **49% of all IDPs** refer to **armed conflict including human rights violations** as top reason for their displacement, those displaced within the last three months referred to **natural disasters** as the main cause.

- According to the CBPM survey conducted in August, the main reason for the displacement of IDPs in the last three months have been natural disasters, followed by security and human rights concerns, and community tensions. **Only 36% of the IDPs displaced in the last three months expressed their intention to return due to safety and family considerations, while 14 % indicated that they will remain in the current location, and 36 % are uncertain about whether to return, integrate, or move onward**, mainly due to overall security situation, economic hardship, children’s education, natural disasters and lack of humanitarian assistance.
- Based on the CBPM findings, **22% of IDPs and refugee returnees were uncertain** about returning to their places of origin mainly due to economic hardship, lack of humanitarian assistance, children not being able to access education, and security concerns.
- **37 % of FGD participants noted that their communities have received new arrivals.** These include returnees deported from Pakistan and Iran, as well as families displaced by floods, drought, and security issues.

