PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN

Returns Emergency Response

as of 30 September 2024

Key figures

733,300 total returns[1]

563,600

77%

111,700 UNHCR-assisted

107,300

96%

35,000 deportations

33,700

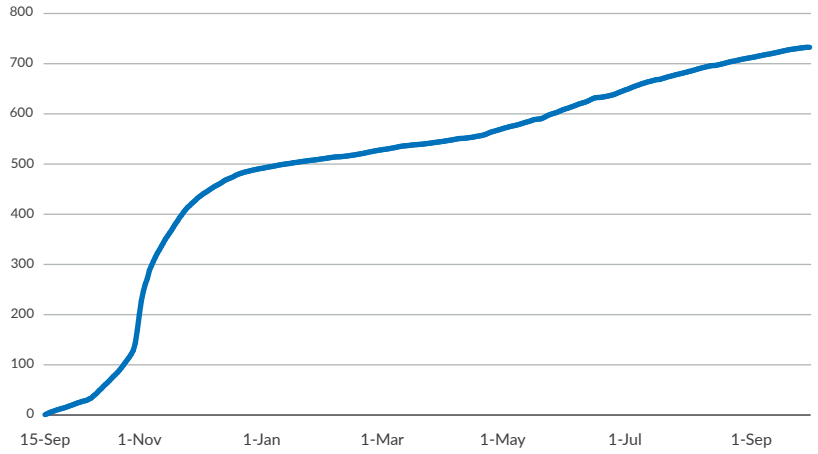
96%

Out of the overall returns **50%** are female, of which **29%** are girls. **59%** are children.

Blue figures above correspond to the period of 15 September 2023 to 30 September 2024, while the **navy figures** refer only to those who arrived from 1 November 2023 to 30 Sep. 2024.

Total returns since 15 September 2023[2]

Number of people (thousands)



Context

On 3 October 2023, 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.

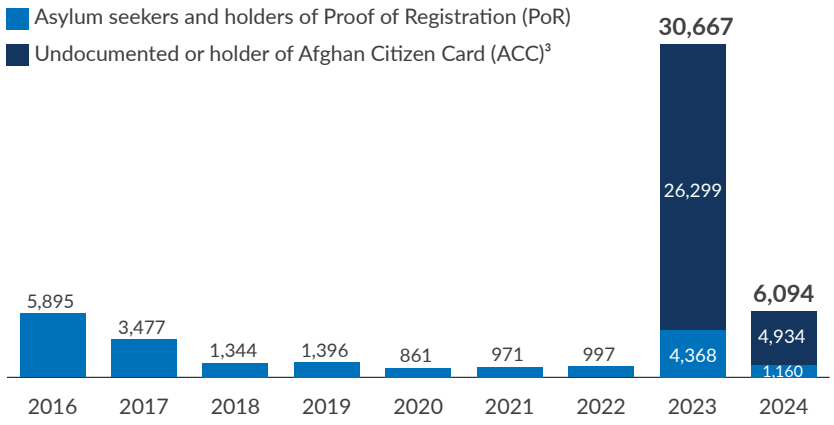
Since 15 September, **over 733,000 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan.** In 2024, returns reached its peak in May-June (38,000 returns each). Returns have decreased ever since with some **22,000 in September**.

Some **6,094 have been arrested or detained in Pakistan this year.** Trends have followed the same pattern and have been decreasing since May (1,130), with **September recording over 630 were arrested or detained.**

In 2024, **over 5,400 individuals have been deported.** The month with the highest deportations in 2024 was May (1,300), in **September some 600 have been deported.**

UNHCR has assisted close to 112,000 returnees.

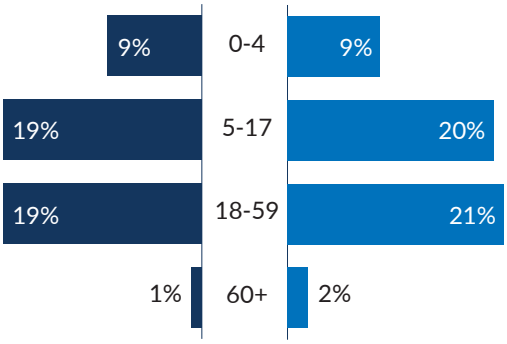
Arrests and detentions (from 2016 up to 21 September 2024)



Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan by Demographic profile

48% of assisted are **Female**

52% of assisted are **Male**



Out of those assisted **2.5%** have disabilities

Gender breakdown of head of households

30% are **Female**

70% are **Male**

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 21 September 2024 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.

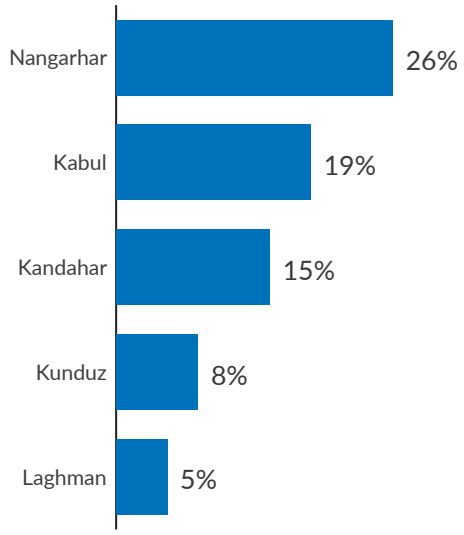
Sources: UNHCR, IOM

Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan

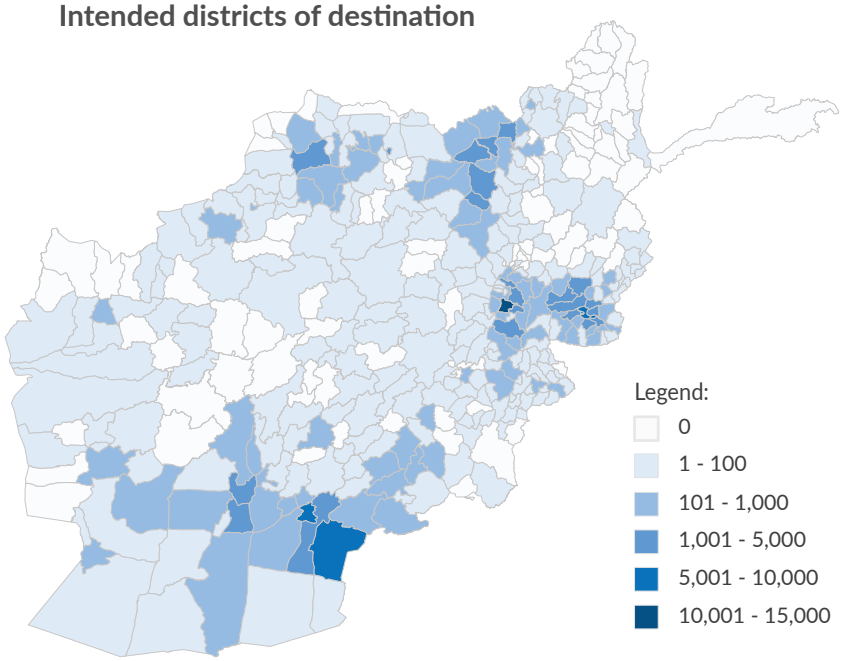
In Afghanistan, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other Protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 111,700 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad encashment centres, including over 71,100 PoR cardholders. Out of the assisted, some 2.5% are individuals with disabilities and over 3,000 PoR card holders, UNHCR slip holders and Asylum certificate holders were deported.

The district with the highest percentage of intended return is Kabul (12%), followed by Kandahar (7%), Bihsod (6%), Jalalabad (6%), and Spinboldak (5%). Almost one-third of the households assisted are headed by women. 33% of them intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Kunduz).

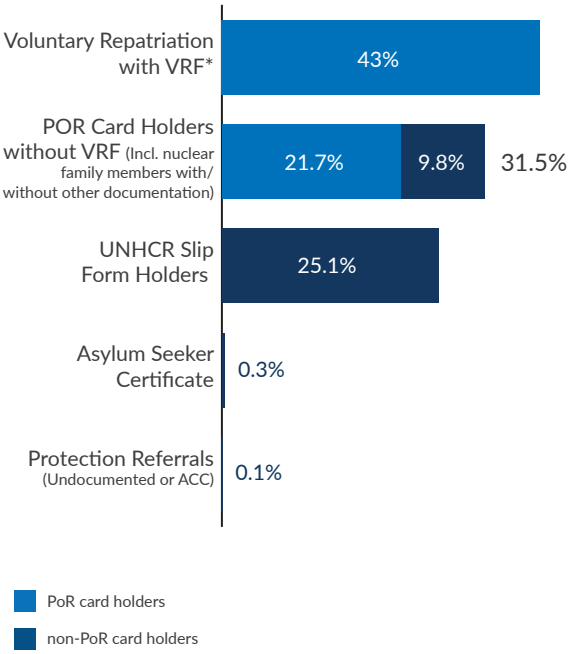
Top 5 provinces of intended destination



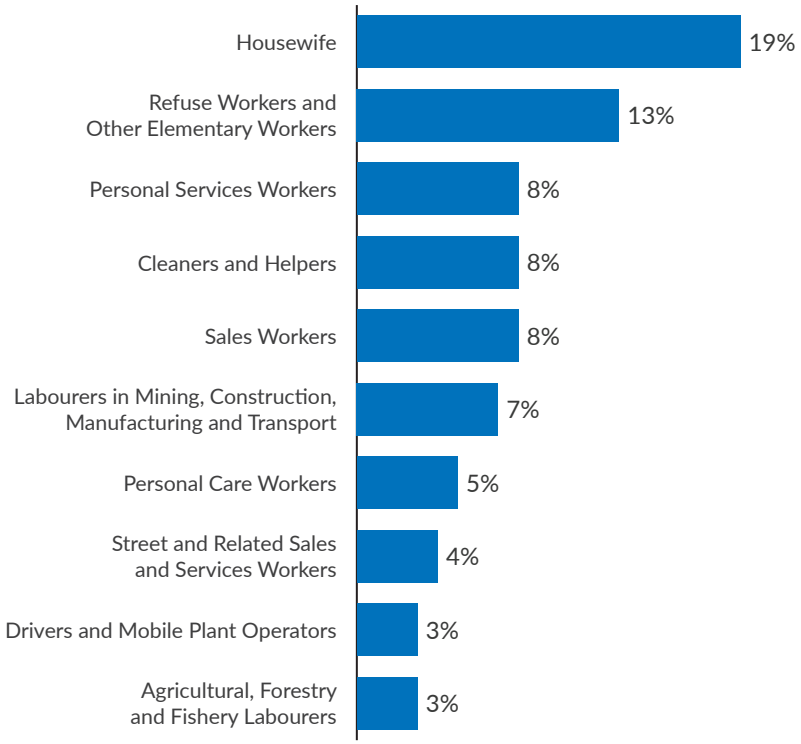
Intended districts of destination



Documentation status



Top 10 occupation of the head of households

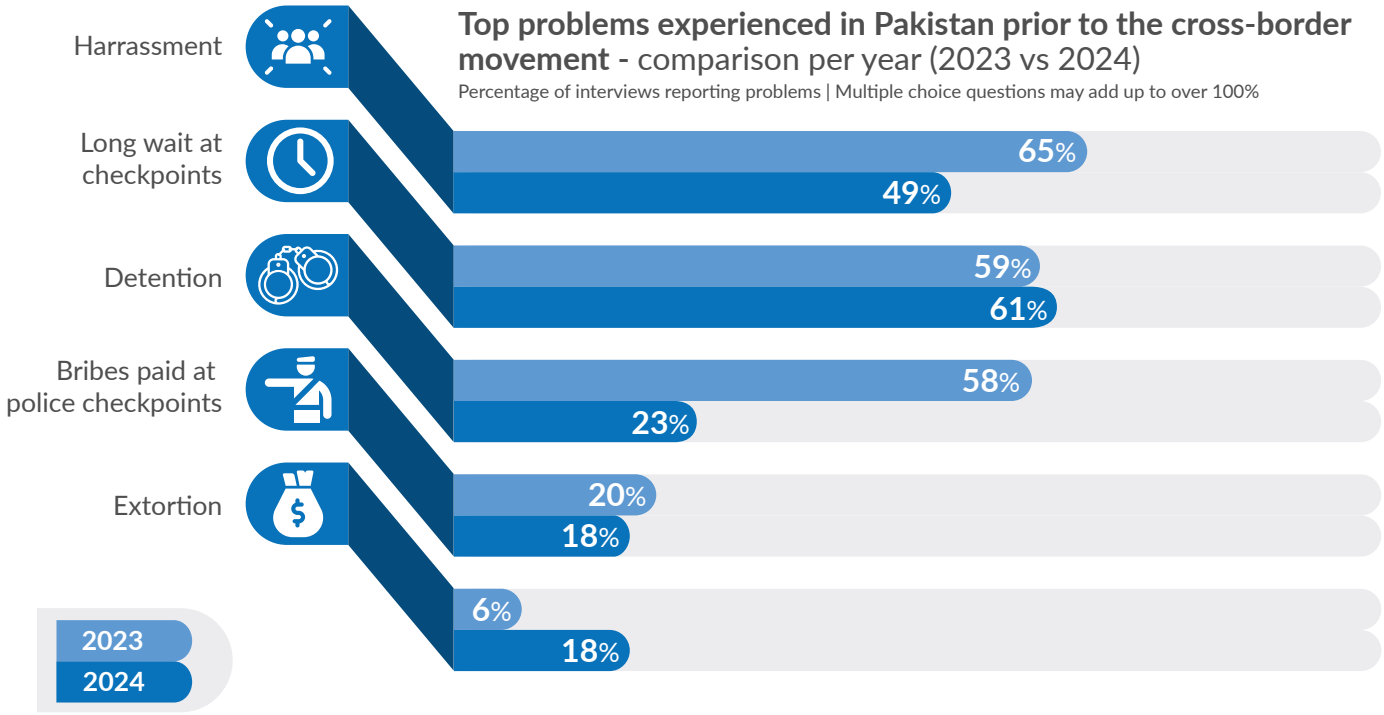


** Voluntary Repatriation Form.*

Border Protection Monitoring

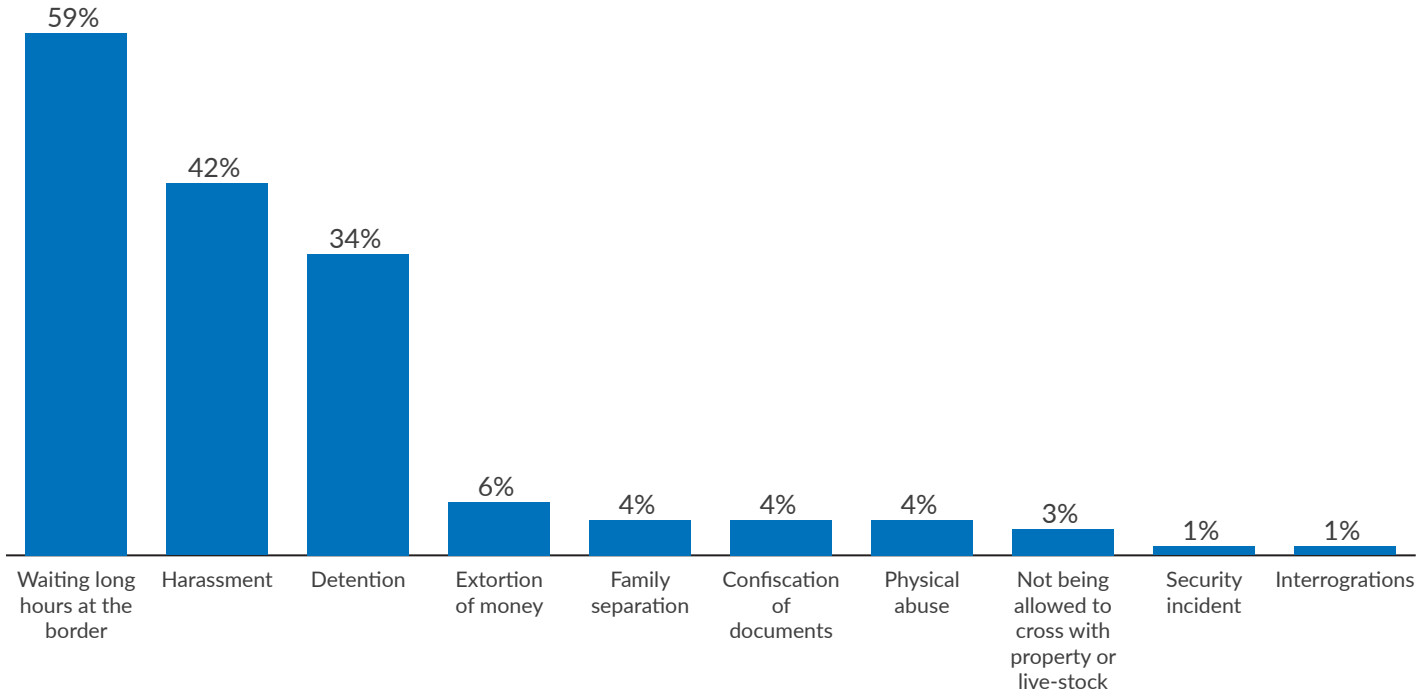
UNHCR and its partner Wadan in Afghanistan have scaled up protection activities at the border. Daily presence consists of Border Protection monitoring through interviews with returnees including deportees in order to identify protection concerns and risks, as well as their intended areas of return in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



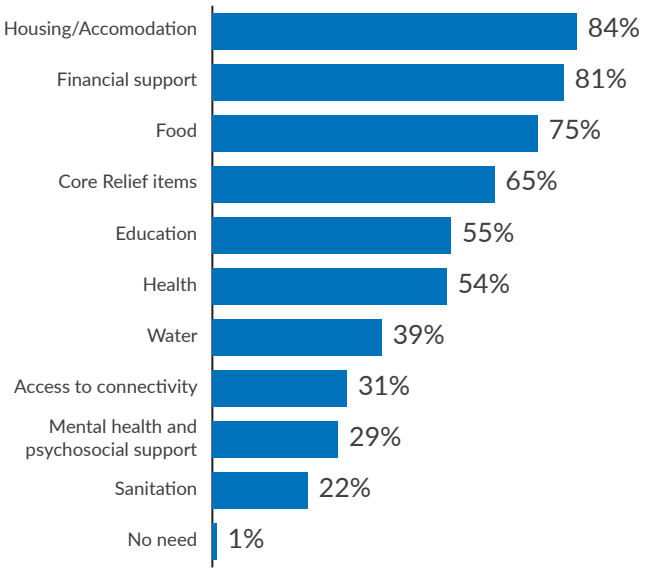
Problems experienced at the Pakistan border point

Percentage of interviews reporting problems | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



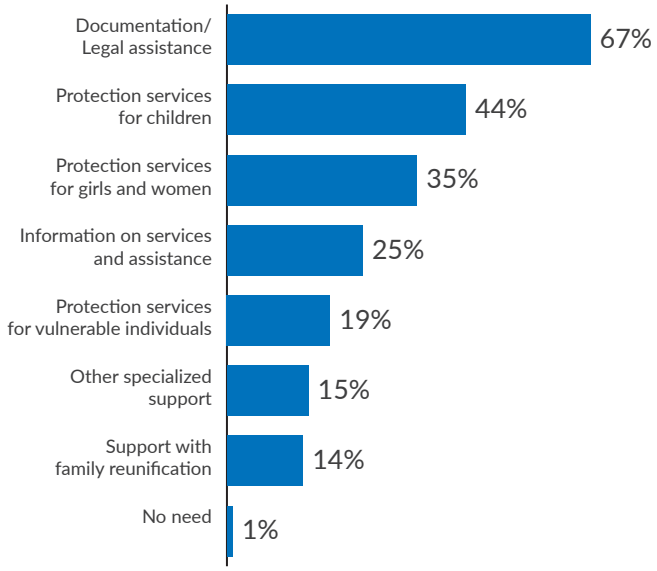
Needs upon arrival in final destination

Percentage of interviews | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



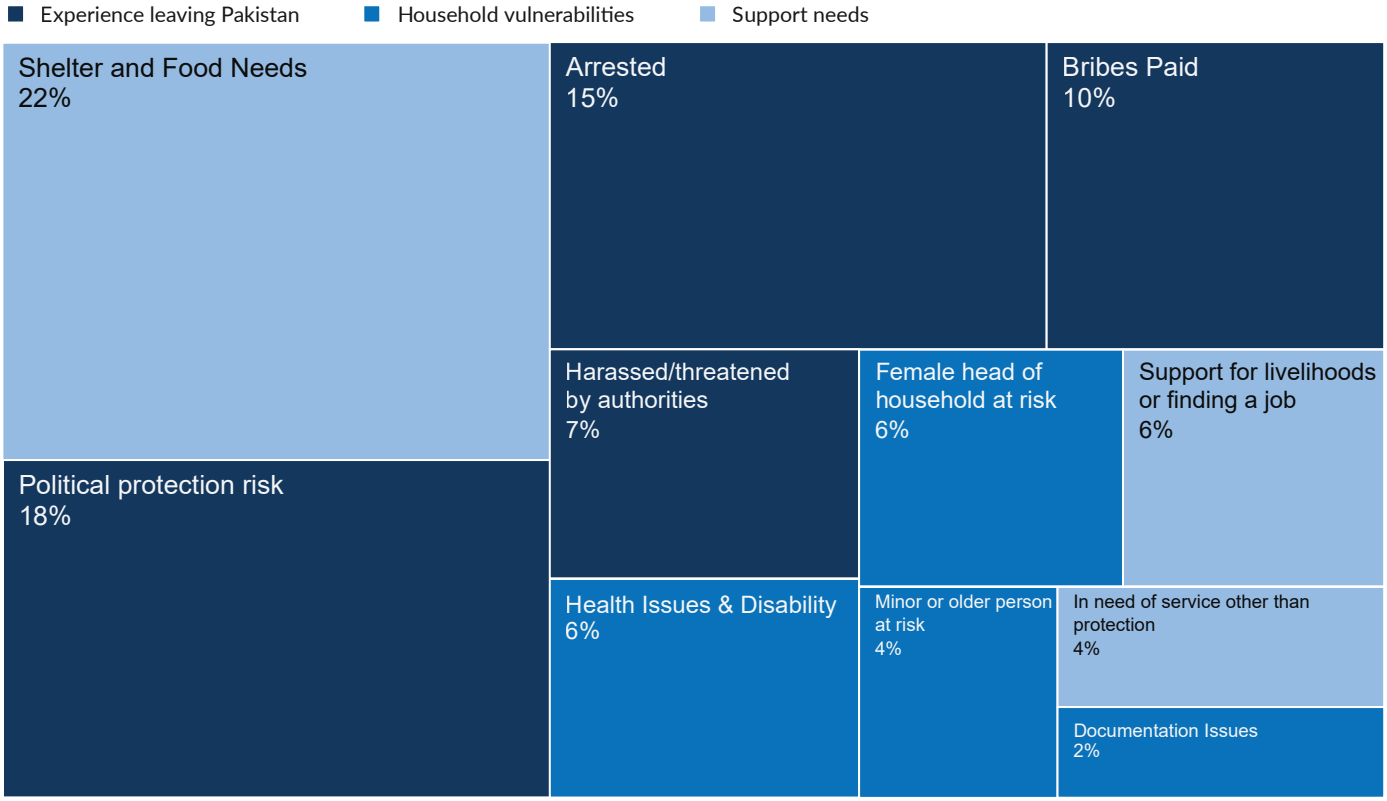
Protection services required in final destination

Percentage of interviews | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



Protection Analysis - using natural language processing

In addition to the border monitoring interviews, returnees who are enrolled and provided with cash assistance are asked to elaborate on topics that they would like to highlight to UNHCR. The descriptive experiences and perceptions shared were analysed with Artificial Intelligence using natural language processing for semantic similarities and patterns.

The analysis done with a word count of 37,393, found 11 detailed clusters shown below. These 11 clusters can be broadly categorized into experiences leaving Pakistan, specific vulnerabilities in the household and requests for support to meet needs in Afghanistan. Amongst the 11 clusters, shelter and food needs, political protection risk, being arrested and requests for financial assistance were the top four most highlighted.

The top highlighted clusters vary with documentation status. For UNHCR Slip holders specifically, paying bribes was the most highlighted cluster followed by shelter and food needs and experiences of being arrested. For those without documentation, in need of support other than Protection services was the most frequently mentioned followed by bribes and female heads of households at risk. The protection risks faced by single women was also the most frequently mentioned by women heads of household regardless of documentation type.