

CONTEXT

Feedback and response systems allow UNHCR and partners to hear directly from refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugee and IDP returnees and host community members with a view to forming a real-time understanding of the protection risks they face and to gauging the effectiveness of protection, assistance and solutions programmes.

Taking into account the different needs and capacities of concerned populations, UNHCR Afghanistan is managing a Complaints and Feedback Mechanism relying on a variety of communication channels accessible all across the country.

THE SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

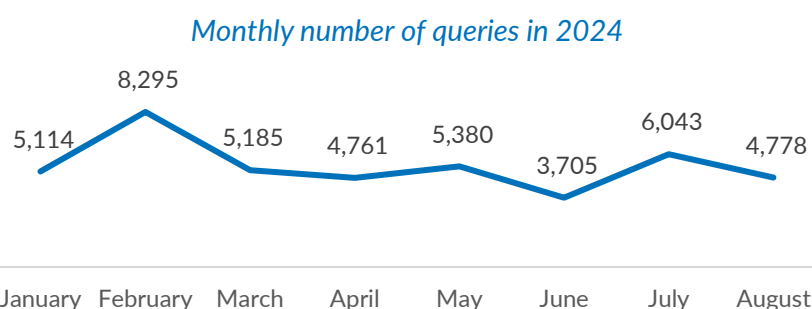
UNHCR Afghanistan’s Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) operates both at Country Office level and across field offices, each equipped with various tools and channels. The Operation supports a protection mailbox, five hotlines managed by Country Office Kabul, Sub Office Jalalabad, Sub Office Kandahar, Sub Office Mazar and Field Unit Bamyan, as well as 30 complaint boxes spread across the country. All queries feed into a centralized Feedback and Response System (FRS). The CFM also includes referrals from the inter-agency humanitarian call centre, Awaaz.

Since September 2023, 102 Community Outreach Volunteers (COVs) and Community Outreach Focal Points (COFPs) deployed across nine provinces are now able to receive and record queries into the FRS. In the context of returns from Pakistan, returnees have the possibility to use the CFM to express their concerns and offer feedback during the registration process at the Encashment Centers.

The latest addition to the CFM are Community-Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM) and Rapid Household Assessments (RHAF) monitors, now tasked with collecting questions, feedback, suggestions and complaints received in the context of their activities via the CFM to expand the outreach of the system and harmonize responses to queries.

TOTAL OF QUERIES

In August 2024, a total of 4,778 questions, feedback, suggestions and complaints were received by UNHCR and partners via the CFM, a decrease from the previous month. Although all channels remain available, internal capacities to receive queries were reduced due to the parallel rollout of a phone protection monitoring assessment targeting over 4,000 refugee returnees. Results of this exercise will be shared by UNHCR within the next few weeks.

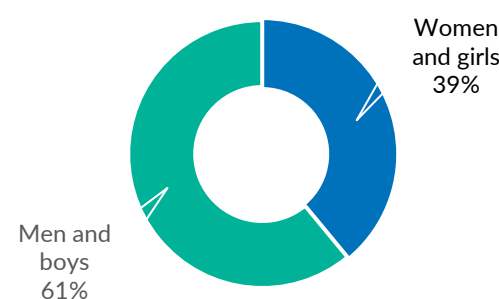


DEMOGRAPHICS

The gender breakdown remained stable with 40% of queries originating from women and girls, a slight decrease from the 42% reported in July. This does not account for the number of women and girls using emails, a channel which does not allow UNHCR to systematically capture or verify gender. Yet, it can be assumed that this mode of communication is favored by women and girls due to the absence of direct interaction and the anonymity it provides.

Representing 49% of all queries, men between 25 and 59 remained the most common category of user, followed by women between 25 and 59 (35%). Accounting for only 4% of all queries, women over 60, boys and girls were the least frequent users. These results are consistent with those reported in July.

Monthly gender breakdown

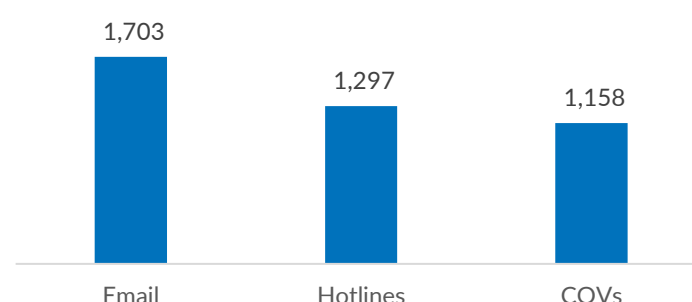


CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Accounting for 37% of all queries, emails were the favored channel of communication (1,703), followed by hotlines (28%, including 32% of women) and community outreach volunteers and focal points (COVs) (25%, including 48% of women). This is consistent with the previous report, when hotlines, emails and COVs were also the top channels.

Looking at women users only, COVs and the hotlines were the favored communication channels.

Top communication channels



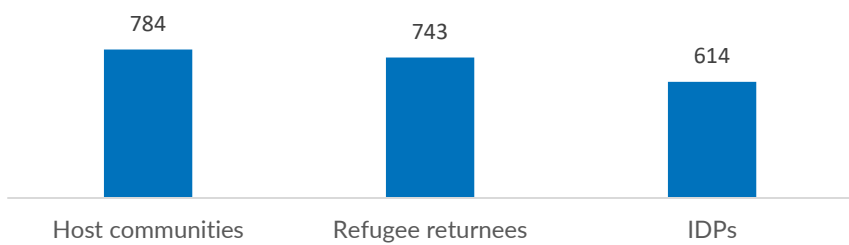


PROFILE

Host community members remained the category who most frequently used the CFM (30% of all queries), followed by refugee returnees (28%) and IDPs (23%). This is consistent with the previous report.

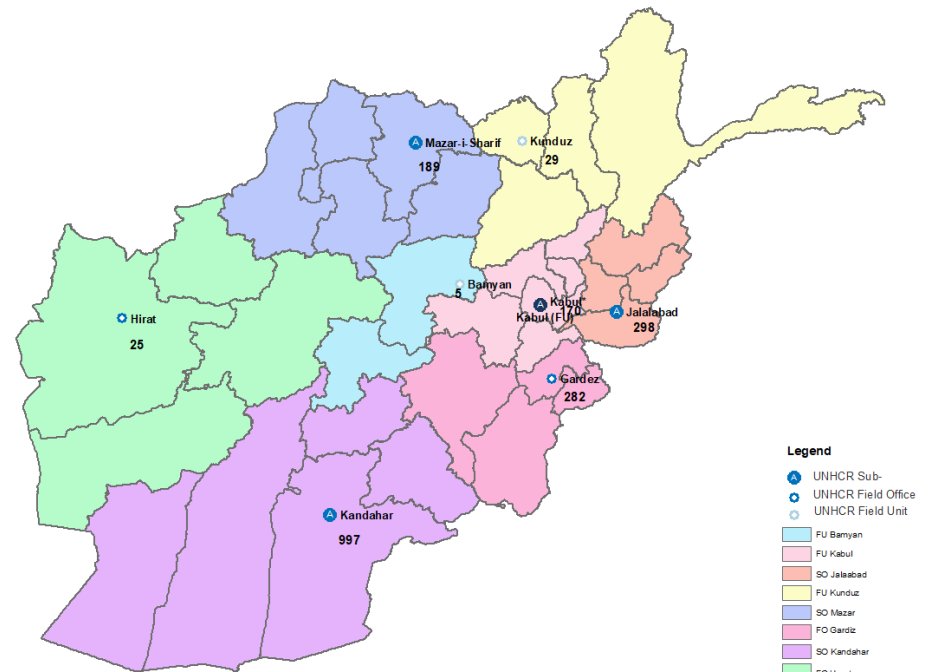
A continuing trend, 74% of inquirers used the CFM to request protection interventions and/or assistance, primarily in relation to specific needs followed by multi-purpose cash, voluntary repatriation cash grant and livelihood opportunities. Next, 14% of queries conveyed requests for information, including information on available assistance and on individual cases. At last, 8% of queries provided feedback on services and 4% formulated complaints, the majority of which concerned delays in receiving assistance and/or assessments followed by allegations of discrimination by partners or community members.

Top population groups




LOCATION

With 997 queries, the Kandahar Office received the highest number of communications, followed by the Jalalabad (598), Gardez (282), Mazar (189), Kabul (170), Kunduz (29), Herat (25) and Bamyan (5) offices. In parallel, the Kabul Country Office continued to centralize the reception and management of queries received by emails.




RESPONSE

CFM operators provided a **response to all queries**. For 1,601 cases requiring **tailored follow-up**, referrals were made to relevant UNHCR Offices and partners. 56% of the queries recorded in August are already closed.

Looking back at all the queries received **since the beginning of the year**, 68% are closed. Although many of these queries have in fact been considered and treated in line with existing standard operating procedures, a challenge remains in the update of entries over time to reflect the various outcomes of individual case processing. This is even more acute when actions have to be taken by partners who do not currently have access to the FRS for data protection reasons. UNHCR is currently working on the FRS tool to streamline the update of cases and expand its use to partners in line with data protection policies



UNHCR staff provides vital protection services and relief in earthquake-hit Sia Aab Village, Herat Province. ©UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production