

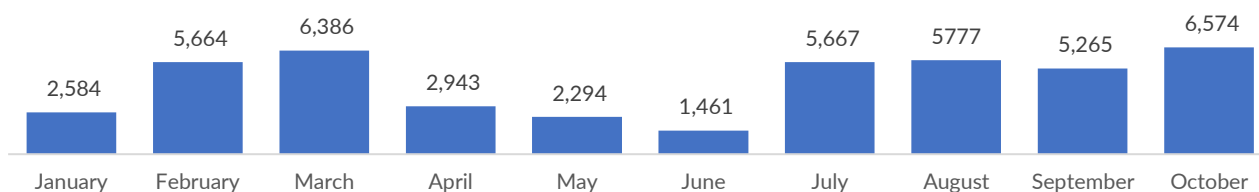
## AFGHANISTAN MONTHLY PROTECTION MONITORING SUMMARY OCTOBER 2024



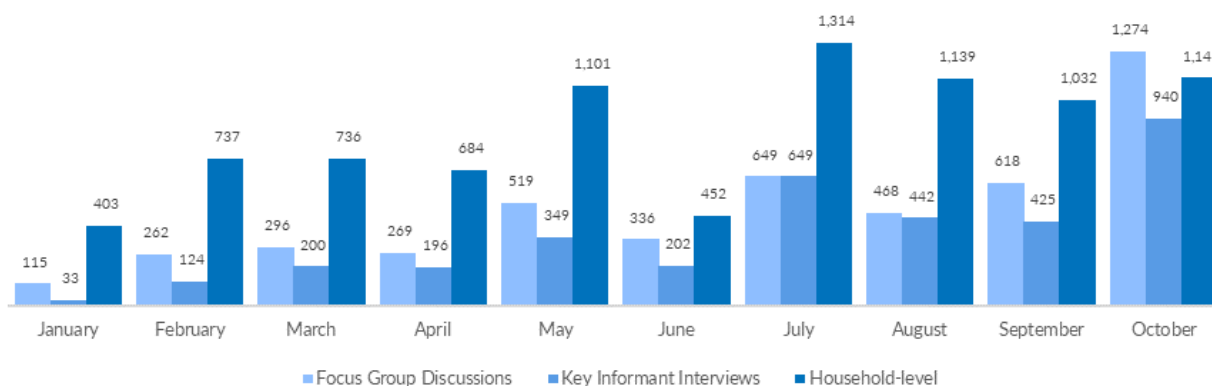


## OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTED

RHAF Assessments (household-level)



CBPM Assessment



UNHCR conducted 9,925 assessments in October 2024, using various tools such as household assessments, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to assess communities' protection needs and risks.

- **Most interviewed households were IDP returnees**, followed by refugee returnees, reflecting UNHCR's focus on the specific protection issues that Afghans face upon their return.
- Across all assessment modalities, **UNHCR reached 61,934 individuals** in October, primarily women and children. Women headed household account for 31% of the interviews, indicating a 1% decrease compared with September.
- 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



**64%** with vulnerabilities



**56%** experienced stress affecting their day-to-day life.



**11%** heads of households with disabilities

- **According to the RHAF survey conducted in October, 64% of heads of households have some form of vulnerability.** These include women at risk, children at risk, female-headed households, older persons at risk, persons with life-threatening health issues, persons with disabilities and child headed households. These findings are supported by the CBPM household assessments, which also point to 5% of the households surveyed being headed by widows (showing a decrease of 1% from the previous month) and 6% by older persons or children (decreased by 5% from the previous month).

- **According to the CBPM survey conducted in September, 51% of respondents indicated that they or their family members had experienced feelings of stress that affected their day-to-day life.** While this is a 5% decrease from the previous month, the results point to a 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 child labor, school dropout, physical health problems, armed conflict, denied access to education, denial of services and opportunities, community tension, family violence, forced marriage and physical and emotional abuse in the family. As a result of experiencing stress, 38% of the respondents indicated that they had observed **behavioral changes** in the household (same as previous month), which included family members appearing sad and stressed, loss of appetite, eating disorder, 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 and women at risk (28%), children at risk (27%), female headed households (19%), older persons at risk (15%), persons with life-threatening health issues (9.5%), persons with disabilities (9%), and child headed households (7.5%). CBPM data also points to high rates of school dropouts (46%) among surveyed families due to a lack of financial support by families and the engagement of children in child labor. This has increased by 8% from the previous month. Life-threatening health issues (16%), age (10%), and legal protection and security needs (5%), are among other risks and vulnerabilities pointed out by the CBPM respondents. **CBPM monitors have also observed tension or violence in 21% of the households** affecting predominantly children (53%), women (33%), older persons (9%) as well as persons with disabilities (6%).

## SAFETY & FREEDOM



**46%** mentioned community areas **off-limits for women and girls.**

- **46 % of the heads of households indicated that there are places in the community that women and girls cannot access,** highlighting the continued significant challenges in freedom of movement and participation in public life.
- The **main places that women and girls cannot go to** include education facilities, markets, clinic, water points, and latrines.
- The **main reasons for movement limitations** include discrimination, harassment, and intimidation in public areas, lack of identity and civil documents, mahram requirements, and safety concerns related to debts and social and cultural barriers.

## CIVIL DOCUMENTATION



**42%** reported barriers **accessing legal services.**

- **Lack of civil documentation** continues to be a key concern raised by household members surveyed. **Women and children are by far the most affected population groups. Refugees, IDPs and**

undocumented returnees display significantly higher rates (91%, 74% and 72%, respectively), while the percentage of refugee returnees and IDP returnees is lower (63% and 67%, respectively). Considering the civil documentation needs reported for Afghan returnees from Pakistan, this trend will be closely observed over the following months.

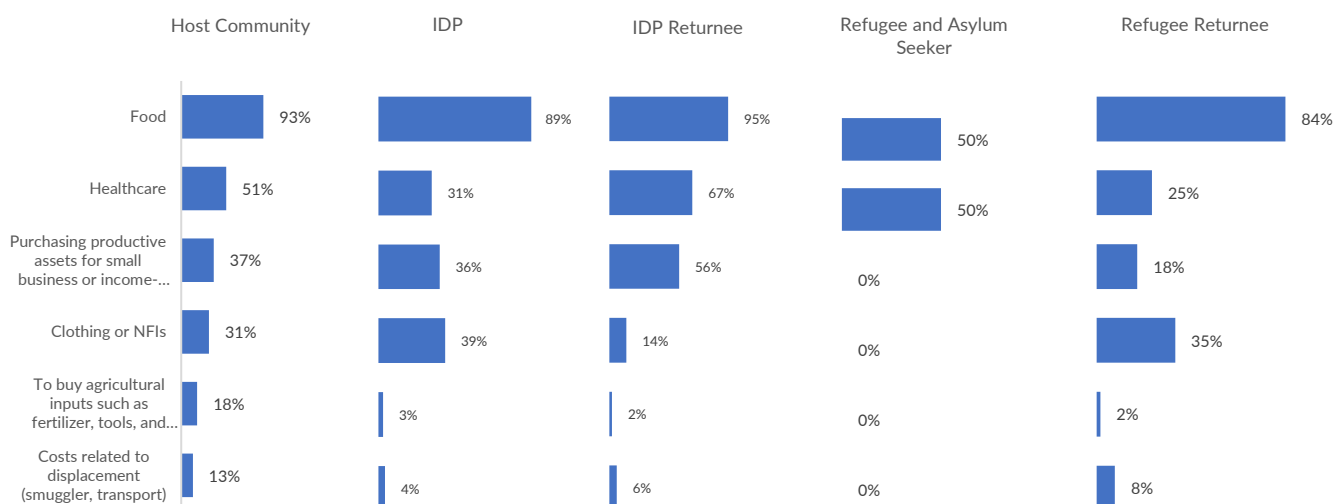
- The **primary documents missing** are e-Tazkera, followed by passport, paper Tazkera, marriage certificates, birth certificate and other certificates. The main reason is that these documents were never obtained. The households interviewed also lacked knowledge about the procedures, the importance of these documents (indicating that the documents are not needed), unaffordable fees, re-issuance problems, destruction of the documents, expiration, and concerns over personal safety.
- The **CBPM survey conducted in October** indicates that legal assistance projects were more effectively implemented and reached more people compared to the last two months. Compared to September, the trend in CBPM assessments shows a 2% increase in barriers faced by respondents in accessing legal assistance, including civil documentation and HLP. The unavailability of services and their high cost, the lack of information on services, restrictions by family members, and lack of identity documents 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

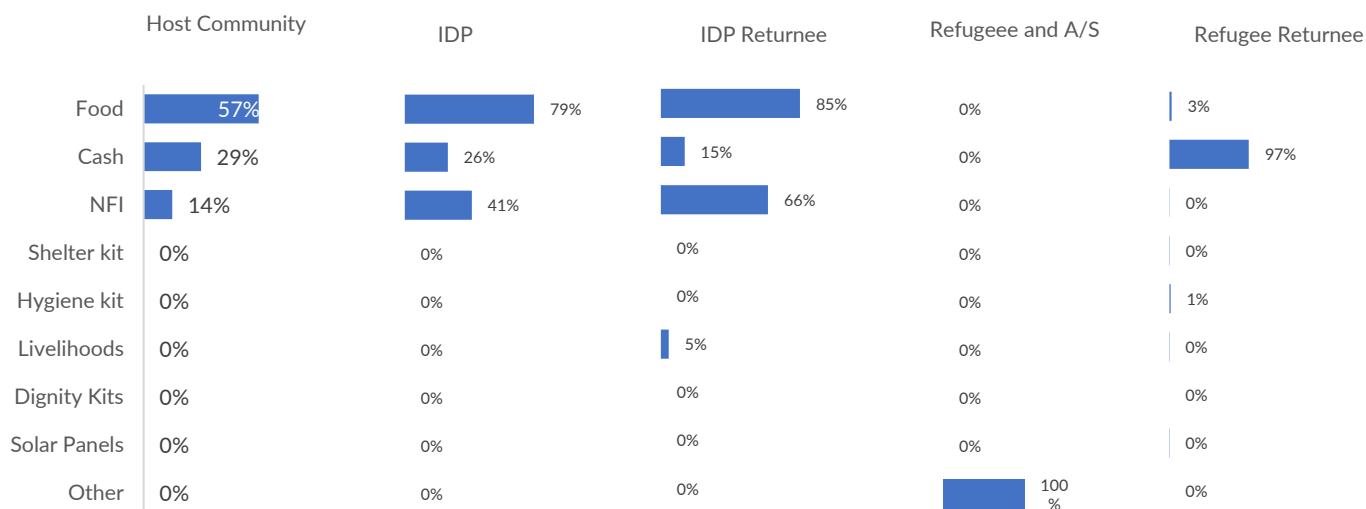


**88% mentioned food** as the most pressing need.

### Top Needs



### Assistance Provided



- Food assistance** continues to be the most crucial need prioritized by households surveyed under the RHAF, followed by healthcare, purchasing productive assets to run a small business, clothing/NFI, shelter, and fuel.
- The vulnerability analysis of the RHAF data for October revealed that despite the assistance provided, **78% of the surveyed households are still in need of humanitarian assistance**. Notably, 97% of refugee returnees surveyed in October have received cash assistance, which shows the effectiveness of UNHCR's respective assistance.
- The vulnerability analysis is confirmed by the CBPM findings, which show 88% of all households reported not receiving 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 to the discrimination or exclusion by the community leaders and the household do not need food assistance. The percentage is even higher among female respondents (95%) than male respondents (83%), pointing to the heightened economic vulnerability of women. **Respondents also face challenges accessing MHPSS services and drinking water**, with 57% and 5% of households respectively needing access to these essential services. However, irrespective of the gender of the head of household, **all respondents highlighted that among those facing access challenges, women and girls are by far the most affected groups**. Refugee returnees and undocumented 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).
- Overall, women and girls continue to face significant challenges in accessing the most basic services**, reflecting 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

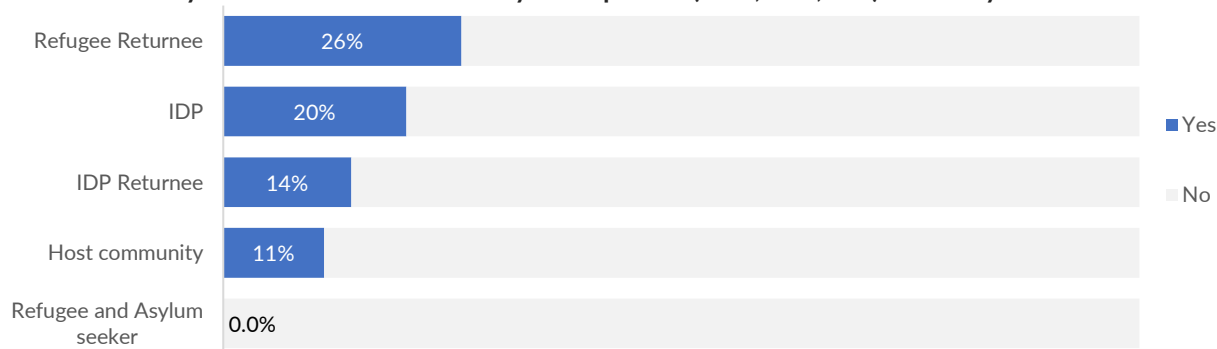


**85% reported selling assets** to meet vital needs.

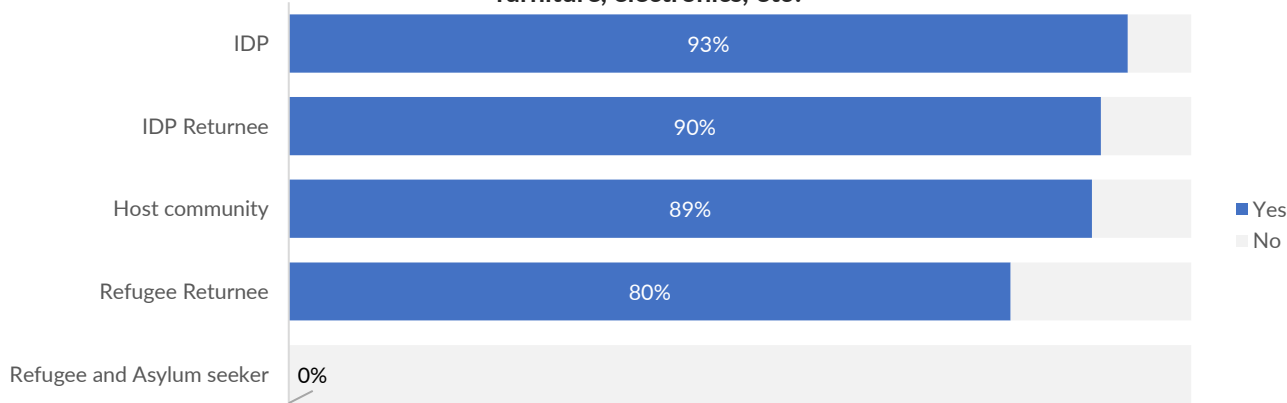


**81% struggled** to cover **daily living expenses** (food, rent, and other basic needs).

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



Did you or any of your household member sold any assets including livestock, jewelry, furniture, electronics, etc?



- 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 returnees and undocumented returnees surveyed. **Other coping mechanisms** identified were selling assets (85% of RHAF respondents and 46% of CBPM respondents have resorted to this measure), child labor, skipping meals or reducing meal sizes, engaging in hazardous work, or relocating family members abroad.
- According to the CBPM findings, a significant number of the surveyed respondents indicated that their **families had adopted harmful practices due to acute poverty and financial reasons**. These included skipping meals, engaging children in labor, including sending them to neighboring countries to work, migrating abroad, and arranging early marriages for their children and contracted child workers given to landlord to alleviate the financial burden. The findings highlight the urgent need to support vulnerable families through integrated programming interventions, including child protection, livelihoods, and community engagement.

## HOUSEHOLDS EMPLOYMENT STATUS & SOURCE OF INCOME



80% engaged in informal income-generating activities.

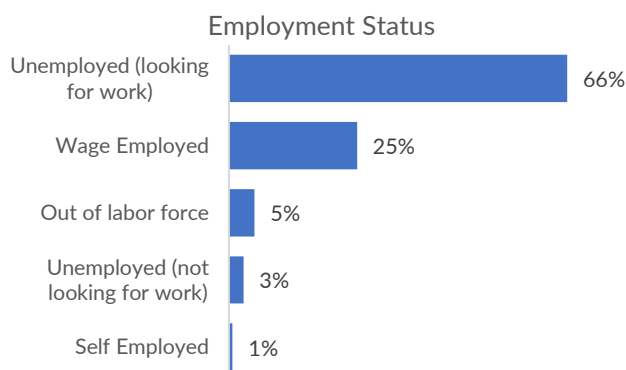


64% relied on financial support from relatives.



66% are unemployed.

- According to the RHAF survey conducted in September, over 66% of households are unemployed, 96% have accrued debts, and 25% rely on daily labor, with whatever income generated usually spent on essential needs and debt repayment. A total of 81% 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



58% of all IDPs refer to **natural disaster** as top reason for their displacement. **Security concerns (armed conflict)** are the top reason for those displaced within the last three months.

- According to the CBPM survey conducted in October, the main reasons for the displacement of IDPs in the last three months were security concerns, natural disasters, and displacement caused by economic reasons.
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in October, 31% of the IDPs displaced in the last three months expressed to return to their original places due to safety and family considerations, while 8% indicated that they would remain in the current location and 62% are uncertain about whether to return, integrate, or relocate, mainly due to overall security situation, economic hardship, lack of services or infrastructure, children's education, natural disasters, and family.
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in September, 35% 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.