

**OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

# Afghanistan

January 2025

UNHCR has assisted over **118,400** Afghan returnees from Pakistan, including **75,600** Proof of Registration (PoR) Card holders, since September 2023. Approximately **50%** of the assisted individuals are women and girls, and **2.5%** of the total assisted beneficiaries have disabilities.

Between 15 September 2023 and 31 January 2025, over **825,600** Afghans have returned to Afghanistan. Of households assisted, at least one in four are headed by women, and approximately **33%** of returnees intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz, and Mazar-i-Sharif).

Out of **825,600**, some **18,300** returned in 2025, out of which some **1,000** were deported. Out of the **1,000**, more than **800** Afghan nationals, among them women and children, have been deported from Islamabad and Rawalpindi alone.

**KEY INDICATORS FOR 2025**

## 9,530

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

## 51%

of all individuals assisted in 2025 are women and girls.

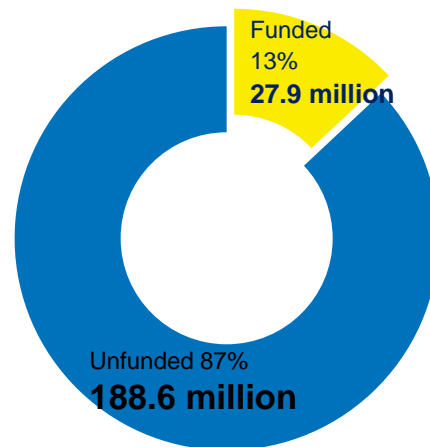
## 9,583

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

**FUNDING (As of 31 January 2025)**

## USD 216.6 million

requested for Afghanistan



# Update on Achievements

## Operational Context

Afghanistan has an estimated **3.22 million conflict-induced** internally displaced persons (IDPs), **1.6 million IDP returnees**, and hosts around **35,000 refugees**<sup>1</sup>, requiring immediate protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as medium to long-term support<sup>2</sup>. UNHCR has assisted **689** people in refugee or refugee-like situations who returned (from Pakistan, Iran and other countries) in 2025. Additionally, in 2025, an estimated **22.9 million** people – almost half of Afghanistan’s population – are projected to require humanitarian assistance<sup>3</sup>.

## Achievements



**UNHCR Assistance to Returnees:** UNHCR assisted a total of 689 individuals (325 females and 364 males) in refugee or refugee-like situations who returned to Afghanistan in January 2025. The assistance provided included cash and other protection services such as basic health care, vaccination, mine risk awareness, child friendly space, overnight accommodation for transit, and protection counselling. These services were provided after a thorough verification and biometric registration process in the encashment centers.

Those assisted include Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) holders, PoR card holders, Amayesh card holders, Gorizah/refugee card holders (Tajikistan), UNHCR slip holders, UNHCR certificate holders, and undocumented family members, with the majority returning from Pakistan.

In January 2025, around 1,000 individuals were deported from Pakistan. These deportations were linked to the announcement made by the Pakistani authorities, in January 2025, to relocate Afghans from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The deportation figure in January was slightly lower, as compared to 1,200 individuals deported in December 2024 and 1,200 individuals deported in November 2024. Since the initial implementation of the Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan (IFRP) phase one in November 2023, the months with highest recorded deportations are November 2023 (24,500 individuals) and December 2023 (3,500 individuals).

In January 2025, the return figures from Iran (76 returns), and Tajikistan (12 returns) are three times higher, compared to the 23 refugee returnees from Iran and four refugee returnees from Tajikistan back in January 2024. UNHCR Afghanistan recorded the deportation of a total of 79 Afghans, as of December 2024, including refugees and those in refugee-like situations, whereas only three deportations were recorded in November 2024. In January 2025, 25 Afghans were deported from Tajikistan.

In view of increased return/deportations from Iran, UNHCR scaled up-border monitoring activities at Islam Qala and Zaranj border crossing points with Iran. This includes deploying additional teams to establish additional protection desks at Islam Qala and Zaranj crossing points, to monitor population movement after official working hours/during the weekend, as well as to ensure adequate screening of deported refugees (Amayesh holders and persons with protection profiles) and their subsequent referral to UNHCR’s encashment centers, including in Herat, to receive protection assistance including a cash grant. UNHCR also expanded protection screening at the Sher Khan Bandar border with Tajikistan, in Kunduz province, to identify and assist deported refugees from Tajikistan.

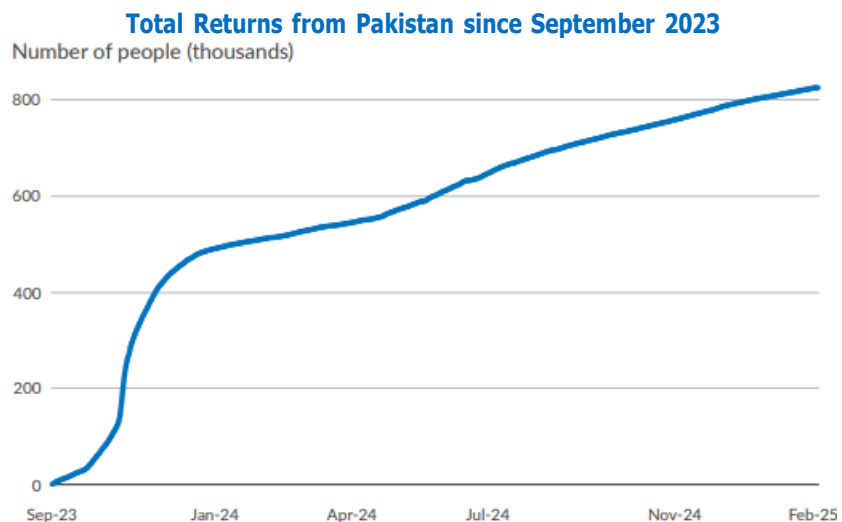
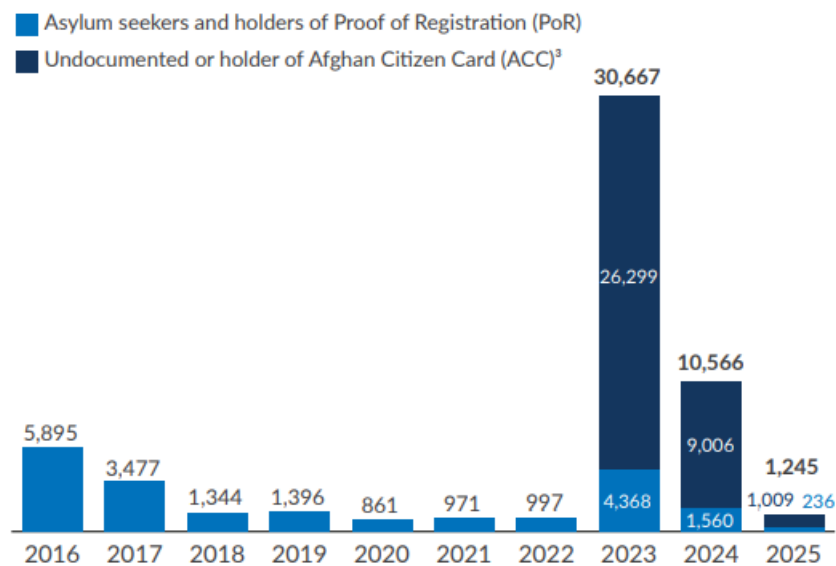
<sup>1</sup> [Afghanistan Operational Data Portal](#)

<sup>2</sup> These figures are expected to increase retroactively with ongoing assessments and considered indicative rather than overall statistical data of IDP returnees in Afghanistan.

<sup>3</sup> [Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan](#)

A total of 91 interviews (40 males and 51 females), were conducted by UNHCR protection teams with newly arrived returnees from Iran, Pakistan and other countries, in January 2025, as part of return/protection monitoring activities. Based on the returnee monitoring findings, the primary reasons of return continue to be linked to protection concerns, including fear of arrest and/or deportation, alleged abuse by police or state authorities, and strict border entry requirements, which limits the ability to commute to Afghanistan for temporary reasons.

### Arrests and detentions (from 2016 to 31 January 2025)



**Border Monitoring:** In January 2025, UNHCR conducted 9,084 household/individual level protection border monitoring interviews (inflow and outflow) with Afghans at seven official crossing points with Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Border monitoring activities at Aqina (border with Turkmenistan) and Hairatan (border with Uzbekistan) have not yet begun. During the same period, a total of 57 interviews were conducted at unofficial crossing points.

In January 2025, an estimated 118,000 Afghan passport holders departed for Iran via Islam Qala, Zaranj and Abo Nasri Farahi.

In January 2025, an estimated 134,400 individuals crossed to Pakistan via the Torkham (68,800) and Spin Boldak (65,600) crossing points and an estimated 128,000 returned via the Torkham (63,000) and Spin Boldak (65,000) crossing points to Afghanistan. In recent years, the majority of the in/outflow movements were reported via Spin Boldak. Angor Ada crossing point in Paktika province remains closed, while Dand-Aw-Patan crossing point in Paktia province, and Ghulam Khan crossing point in Khost province, are only open for commercial movements (trucks transporting goods).

Dak unofficial crossing point in Nimroz province was closed on 18 January, to ensure the implementation of the [decree](#) issued by the DfA Supreme Leader to prevent illegal movement/trafficking of Afghans abroad facilitated by smugglers. According to border monitors, the DfA has fully sealed the crossing point to prevent pedestrian irregular outflow movements. However, the crossing point remained open for the movement of commercial goods.

UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance, reaching a total of 128 families composed of 331 Afghans in refugee and refugee like situations returned/deported from Pakistan, Iran and Tajikistan in 2025. The categories include PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum-seeker certificate holders, Amayesh card holders (from Iran), Gorizah/refugee card holders (from Tajikistan) and other protection referrals.

UNHCR's mixed-gender teams are stationed at the Spin Boldak and Torkham border crossing points, conducting protection interviews with the newly arrived Afghans from Pakistan, including women. Help desks are available to identify people with sensitive protection profiles and to conduct referrals to available services, including to the UNHCR protection team for further assessment of protection concerns and needs. Shelter, livelihood, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene were identified as the most critical needs. The same procedure has been established in the borders with Iran to assess and assist deported refugees (Amayesh card holders) and persons with protection profiles.

**Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM):** In January 2025, UNHCR and its partners received a total of 2,758 questions, feedback, suggestions, and complaints through the Complaint and Feedback Mechanism (CFM). The gender breakdown showed a slight decrease compared to the previous month, with 26 percent of queries originating from women and girls (down from 29 percent in December 2024). As in the previous month, refugee returnees remained the most frequent users of the CFM, accounting for 46 percent of the total queries. This was followed by host community members at 25 percent, internally displaced persons (IDPs) at 10 percent, and IDP returnees at 3 percent.

Accounting for 68 percent of all queries, email was the preferred communication channel in January 2025, with 1,868 email queries received. This was followed by hotlines, which accounted for 30 percent of the queries.

The queries included requests for assistance or intervention on issues such as Persons with Specific Needs (PSN), multi-purpose cash, CARE, shelter, livelihood, food, and health. Other common queries involved requests for information on assistance, employment, partnership, follow-up on individual cases, as well as general feedback and complaints.

In response to these queries, a total of 288 referrals were made to relevant UNHCR offices and partners for tailored follow-up. Notably, around 96 percent of the queries recorded in January have already been closed.

**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS):** In January, UNHCR developed further on a well-being manual of five sessions, aiming at improving life skills, where the attendees can utilize overcoming psychosocial problems. Also, UNHCR finalized the draft standard operational procedure for MHPSS, aiming at harmonizing services across the country. UNHCR Afghanistan, in collaboration with Queen Margret University, delivered a session on community based MHPSS approaches as a guest speaker to students enrolled in MSc Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programme. The session focused on UNHCR's experience in contextualizing MHPSS in Afghanistan as well as community-based interventions.

**Legal Assistance:** UNHCR partners in Jalalabad and Kabul continued to provide legal assistance to refugees, IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees and host community members. In January 2025, 24 legal awareness sessions were facilitated by partners, reaching 386 individuals, including 102 women and

girls. A total of 14 people received legal counselling, and 153 individuals accessed legal aid. The sessions addressed the importance of legal documentation to accessing a wide range of services and provided practical guidance on documentation procedures in Afghanistan.



### SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS

As part of the 2025 implementation plan, 400 permanent shelters are planned for construction, alongside the completion of projects carried over from 2024. The construction of 158 earthquake-resilient shelters in Herat carried over from 2024 is currently 49% complete.

Out of the 615 permanent shelters carried over from 2024, 553 have been completed (494 in SOJ, 59 in Herat), while 62 are under construction in both locations. Both projects carried over from 2024 are expected to be completed by the end of March 2025.



### Cash Based Interventions (CBI)

UNHCR delivered cash assistance to 5,807 individuals (3,078 females and 2,729 males) in January 2025, through various CBI programs, including FARE, VolRep, cash for basic needs, CARE for IDP Return (with earmarked contribution), cash for legal assistance and cash for Urban Refugees. The assistance, which covered a wide range of services, has also supported families in reintegrating, addressing protection and other lifesaving concerns, and contributing 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.

## Acknowledgements

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.



Private donors are from Australia, Egypt, France, Hong Kong, Italy, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and USA.

## 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](#)