



UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #105

ARREST AND DETENTION FLOW MONITORING (15 September 2023 – 1 August 2026)

INTRODUCTION

In response to the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) decision of 26 September 2023 to enact an "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan", UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and IOM, the UN Migration Agency, have collated their data on the arrest, detention, and deportation of Proof of Registration (PoR) holders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and undocumented Afghan nationals as well as on the outflows of Afghan nationals at the Torkham, Ghulam Khan, Chaman, Badini and Bahramcha border crossing points, to better understand the protection environment and movements of Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan.

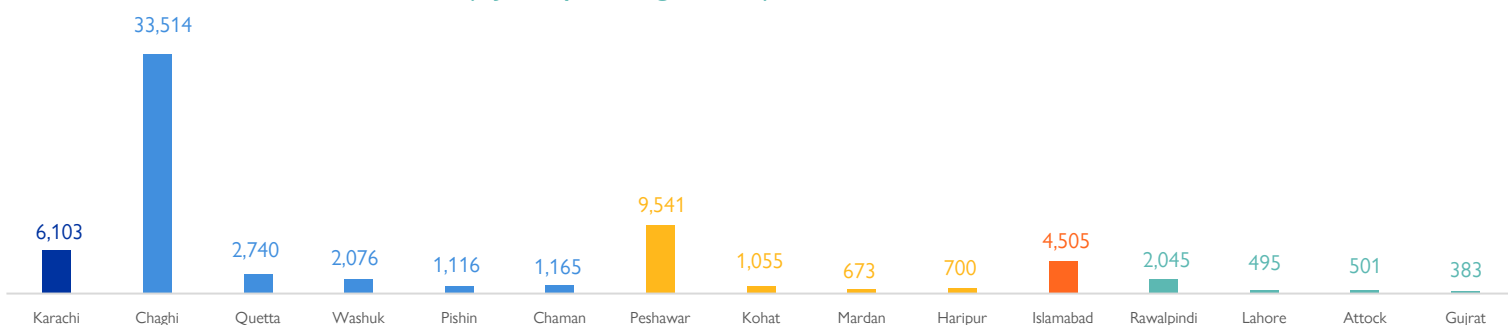
In 2025, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) issued several directives impacting Afghan nationals. In January, the GoP announced that Afghan nationals should relocate from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) and Rawalpindi, or else face deportation. In April, further announcements indicated the implementation of the second phase of the "IFRP", targeting ACC holders, in addition to undocumented Afghans. In July, the GoP issued a Statutory Regulation Order (SRO) directing the repatriation/deportation of PoR card holders following the expiry of PoR card validity on 30 June. The GoP later indicated a deadline of 1 September for PoR holders to leave Pakistan, before the start of the repatriation/deportation process. UNHCR issued a [press briefing](#) expressing concern regarding the decision and urging the GoP to exempt Afghans with international protection needs, as well as those with particular circumstances or vulnerabilities, from involuntary return.

KEY FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

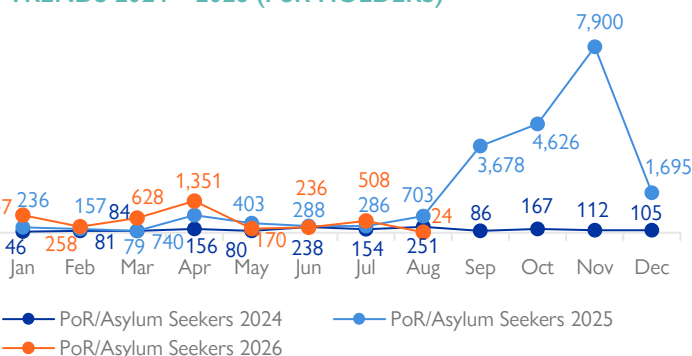
Prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals. Since January 2023, IOM has started to collect this data. The figures, particularly of undocumented Afghan nationals, should be considered underreported.

- During the reporting period (26 July – 1 August) a total of 2,333 Afghan nationals were arrested and detained, representing a 13% decrease compared to the previous week (19 – 25 July).
- Out of all arrests and detentions during the reporting period (26 July – 1 August), ACC holders and undocumented Afghans represented 93% of the total rate of arrest and detentions, and PoR holders represented 7%.
- During the reporting period (26 July – 1 August), 35% of the total reported arrests and detentions took place in KP, 33% in Sindh, 25% in Balochistan, and 7% in Punjab.
- Across Pakistan, the top three districts for arrest and detention between 1 January and 1 August 2026 were Chaghi (Balochistan), Peshawar (KP), and Karachi (Sindh).

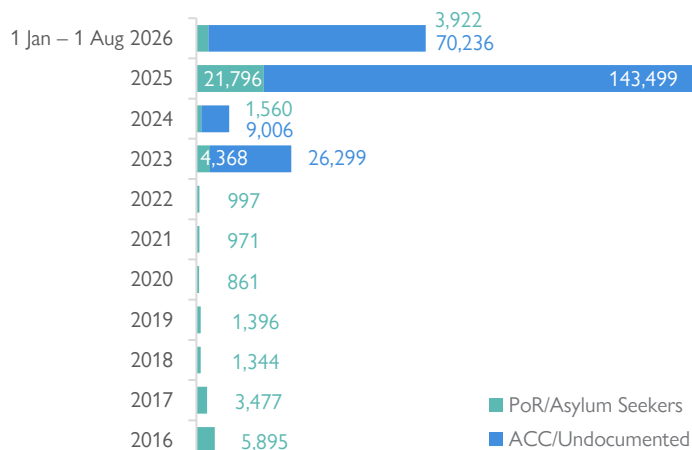
NO. OF ARRESTS – TOP 15 DISTRICTS (1 January – 1 August 2026)



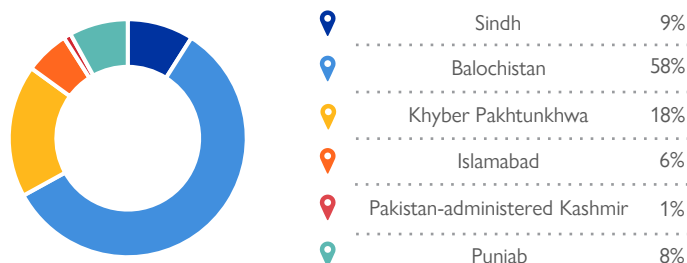
MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION TRENDS 2024 – 2026 (PoR HOLDERS)



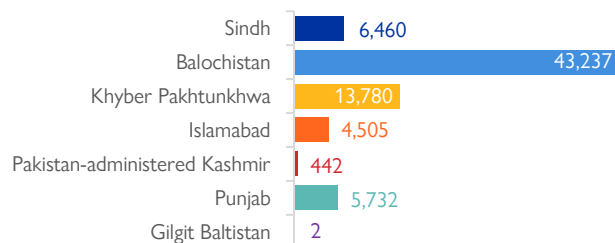
ARREST AND DETENTION BY YEARS



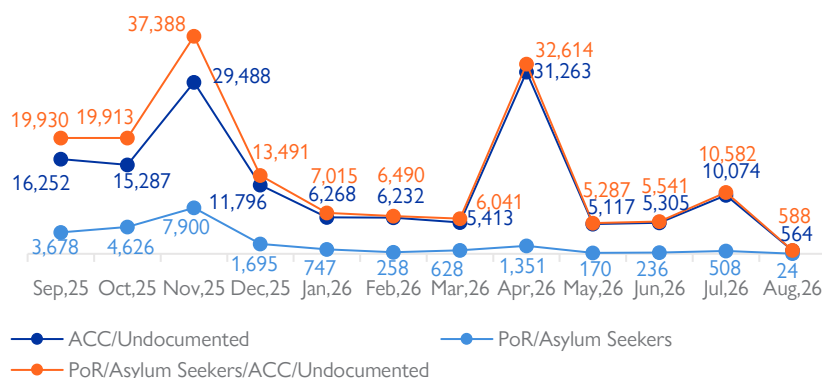
% OF ARRESTS BY LOCATION (1 January – 1 August 2026)



NO. OF ARRESTS BY PROVINCE (1 January – 1 August 2026)



MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION ANALYSIS 2025 – 2026





UNHCR border monitors conducting an interview at Torkham border. [UNHCR Pakistan 2026]

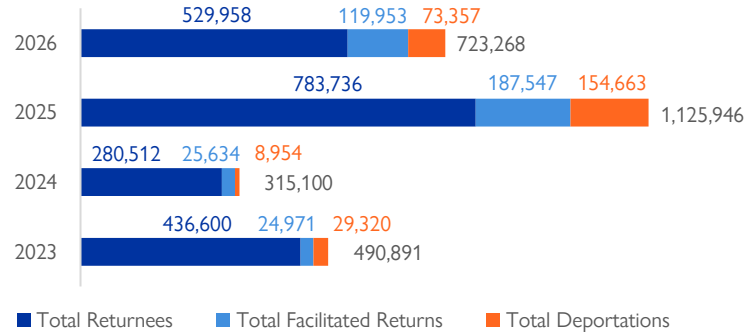
KEY FINDINGS

- Cumulatively, from 15 September 2023 to 1 August 2026, 2,655,205 individuals have returned.
- During the period 26 July to 1 August, UNHCR and IOM estimate 20,263 Afghans returned through the Torkham, Ghulam Khan (located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Chaman, Badini and Bahramcha (located in Balochistan) border crossing points to Afghanistan.
- Between 26 July to 1 August, the number of returns decreased by 10% and deportations decreased by 13% — compared to the previous week of 19 – 25 July 2026 (22,608 returns including 2,686 deportations). During 26 July to 1 August, a total of 20,263 returns were reported, including 2,333 deportations. The decrease in returns and deportations is primarily linked to ongoing arrest operations during the reporting period.
- For the returns from 26 July to 1 August, most of the returnees were undocumented (50%) followed by PoR holders (34%) and ACC holders (16%). Majority of the PoR returns were processed by UNHCR through the Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs).
- For the deportees from 26 July to 1 August, most were undocumented (94%) followed by PoR holders (4%) and ACC holders (2%).
- Since 1 April 2025, 1,801,172 Afghan nationals returned, of which 224,923 (12%) were deported.
- During the period, fear of arrest remained the main reason for return among undocumented individuals and ACC holders (95%) as well as for PoR holders (67%).
- During the same time period, returnees were most likely to return from Quetta (17%), Nowshera (14%) and Peshawar (13%) in Pakistan and intend to go to Nangarhar (28%), Kabul (22%) and Kunduz (13%) in Afghanistan.

CUMULATIVE | 2023 – 2026



Period	Total Number of Returns	Total Returnees	Total Facilitated Returnees	Total Deportees
15 Sep – 31 Dec 2023	490,891	436,600	24,971	29,320
1 Jan – 31 Dec 2024	315,100	280,512	25,634	8,954
1 Jan – 31 Dec 2025	1,125,946	783,736	187,547	154,663
1 Jan – 1 Aug 2026	723,268	529,958	119,953	73,357
Total	2,655,205	2,030,806	358,105	266,294



DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES (EXCLUDING DEPORTEES)

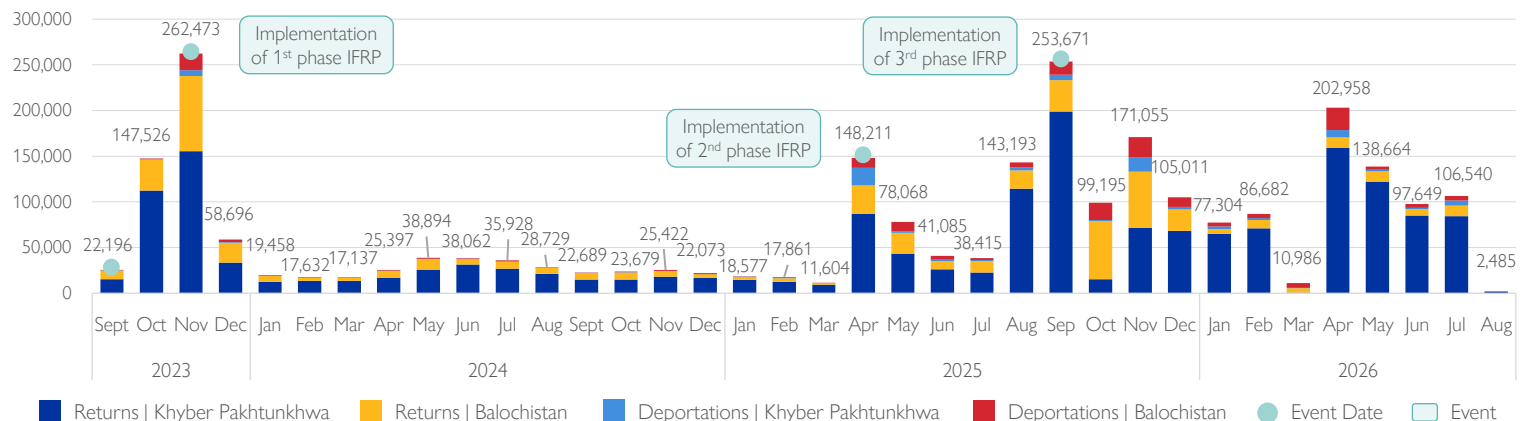


	Undocumented ***	1,503,879 (63%)
	ACC holders	163,565 (7%)
	PoR holders ****	721,467 (30%)

DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL DEPORTEES

	ACC/Undocumented (15 Sep 2023 – 31 Mar 2025)	39,329
	Undocumented (1 Apr 2025 – 1 Aug 2026)	191,473
	ACC holders (1 Apr 2025 – 1 Aug 2026)	18,881
	PoR holders ***** (15 Sep 2023 – 1 Aug 2026)	16,611

TOTAL RETURNS AND DEPORTATIONS | 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 1 AUGUST 2026



* This number includes returnees who received post-arrival assistance by the IOM-led Border Consortium in Afghanistan at Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossing points.

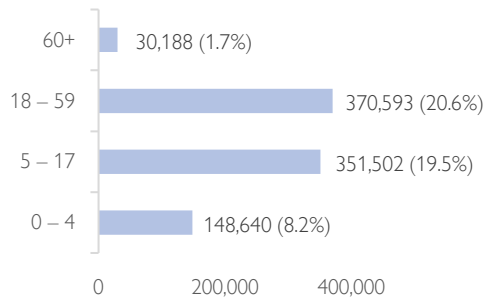
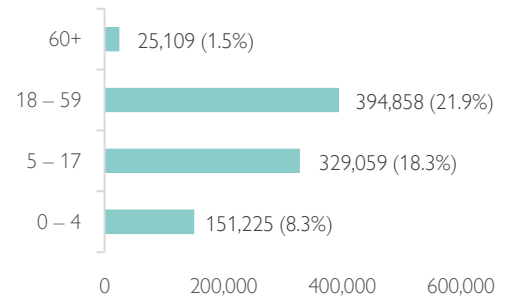
** The number refers to facilitated PoR returns through VRCs who crossed the border during the reporting period.

*** Includes 51,491 Afghans who were registered with UNHCR.

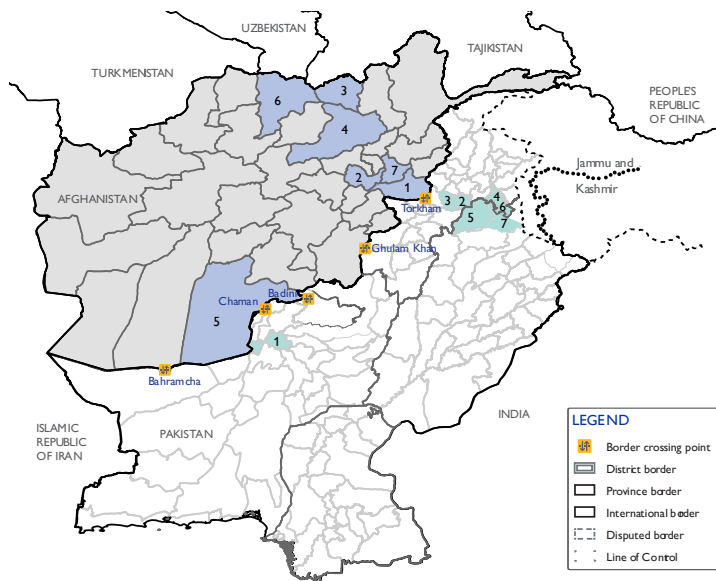
**** Refers to all groups of undocumented Afghans, including of holders of expired PoR cards who did not renew their PoR cards during the latest verification exercise conducted by the GoP in 2021 (DRIVE).

***** This figure refers to PoR holders based on interviews conducted with returnees in Afghanistan.

AGE AND GENDER*****

1,801,172TOTAL NUMBER OF
RETURNS SINCE 1 APRIL 2025
MALE
900,922
(50.0%)

FEMALE
900,250
(50.0%)


DISTRICT OF ORIGIN IN PAKISTAN AND PROVINCE OF DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN*****



DISTRICT OF ORIGIN (TOP 7)

1. Quetta	17%
2. Nowshera	14%
3. Peshawar	13%
4. Haripur	10%
5. Attock	8%
6. Islamabad	6%
7. Rawalpindi	6%

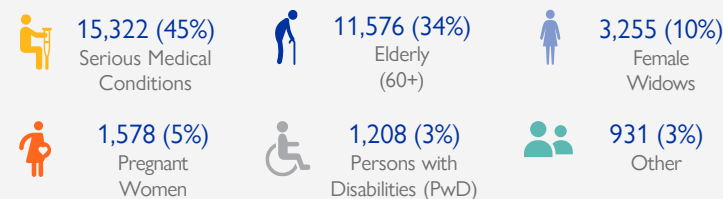
PROVINCE OF DESTINATION (TOP 7)

1. Nangarhar	28%
2. Kabul	22%
3. Kunduz	13%
4. Baghlan	7%
5. Kandahar	7%
6. Balkh	7%
7. Laghman	5%

This section only applies to ACC holders and undocumented Afghans

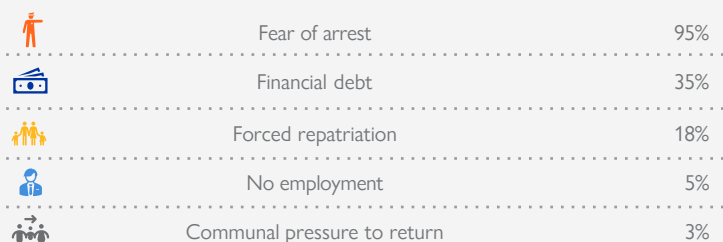
TYPE OF VULNERABILITY

(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)



TOP 5 REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN

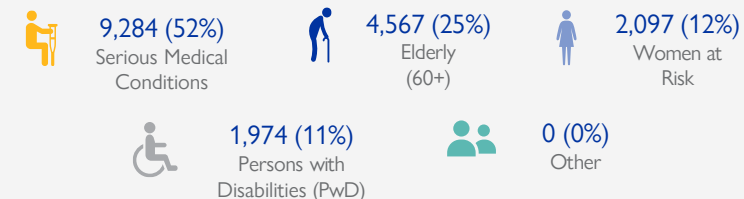
(Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 61,141)



This section only applies to PoR holders

TYPE OF VULNERABILITY

(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)



TOP 5 REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN

(Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 8,779)



***** The figures shown in this visual are based on gender and age aggregated figures from UNHCR and IOM, which were available for 43 per cent (766,276 individuals) of the total returns and then applied to the total return figure since 1 April 2025. For the remaining 57 per cent, no age/gender disaggregated data is available.

***** Disclaimer: Dotted line represents approximately the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This document was produced jointly by IOM and UNHCR. The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM or UNHCR. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.