

## UNHCR Pakistan Monthly Protection Trends Reporting Concerning Afghan Refugees | November 2017

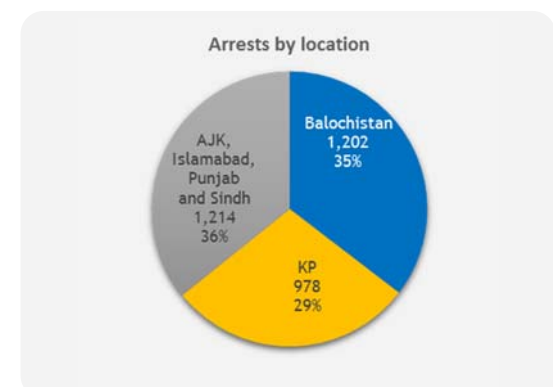
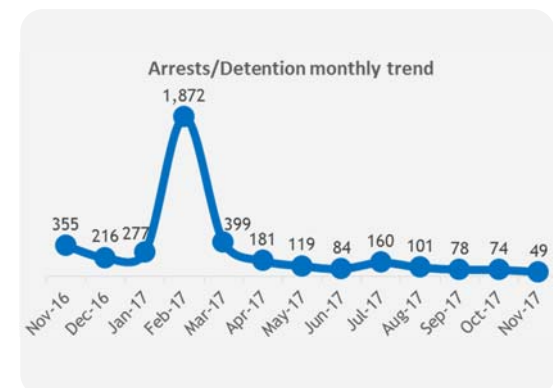
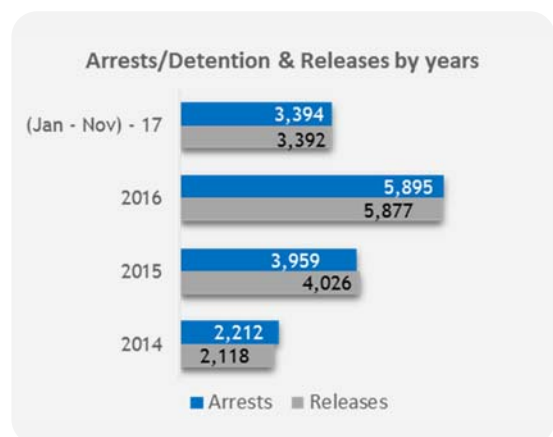
In order to monitor push and pull factors influencing the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees, UNHCR Pakistan compiles a monthly note to inform key stakeholders of emerging trends and to raise formally and consistently any protection concerns that may arise.

### Trends

The voluntary repatriation of the Afghan refugees stopped for winter break on 30 November 2017. The repatriation will commence in April 2018. In 2017, 59,020 refugees repatriated to Afghanistan. The number is lower than the 381,000 refugees who returned in 2016. This lower number of repatriation can be attributed to the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and the improved protection environment in Pakistan. Currently there are 1,386,000 Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan.

The documentation of undocumented Afghans in Pakistan is ongoing. So far 481,520 Afghans have submitted their details to receive Afghan Citizen Card (ACC). The process is expected to continue through January 2018. The cards will be issued in March 2018.

The 29<sup>th</sup> Tripartite commission meeting between Afghanistan, Pakistan and UNHCR was held on 30 November. All the parties “encouraged the extension of the validity of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards until 31 December 2018 for the continued protection of Afghan refugees, pending the ongoing review by the Federal Cabinet of the Government of Pakistan and based on the mutual agreement”.

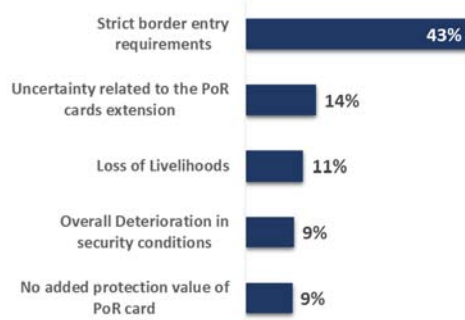


## Summary of Events

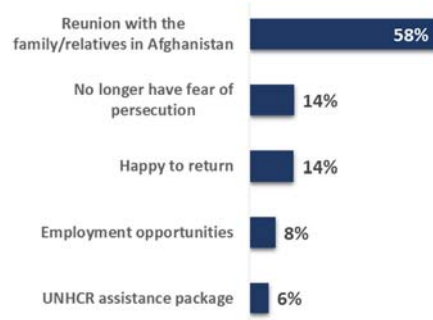
### 1. Reports from Exit Interviews/Encashment Centre Reporting

During interviews conducted at Baleli and Azakhel VRCs, returnees cited “strict border entry requirements” as the major factor influencing their return (43 percent). The percentage of returnees expressing uncertainty regarding the PoR cards extension was the second factor influencing return decisions from Pakistan. This likely reflects the fact that PoR cards are set to expire in December 2017 and no extension has yet been granted. UNHCR continues to advocate for an extension with the government.

#### Push Factors



#### Pull Factors



### 2. Arrests & Detention

In November, 49 Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders were arrested, compared to 74 in October. All of them were released after the intervention of Advice and Legal Aid Centre lawyers. There has been a steady decline in the cases of arrests and detention since February 2017 when 1,872 PoR card holders were arrested.

### 3. Evictions/ Eviction Notices

Residents of Berari and Ichrian refugee villages have been served eviction notices. They have been asked to vacate the villages by 15 December. The two refugee villages are close to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The refugees have been asked to either move to other refugee villages, urban areas or opt for voluntary repatriation. Eviction is inevitable as the settlements of the Pakistani citizens are also being moved away from the CPEC route. UNHCR is advocating for delay in the evictions so that the refugees have enough time to make informed decisions.