

The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, first opened its office in Iran in 1984 and has since maintained an uninterrupted field presence countrywide. UNHCR's main government counterpart in Iran is the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior. UNHCR also collaborates with other government ministries and organizations, as well as local and international NGOs and other UN agencies, to help ensure that all refugees have covered their basic needs and can access services. UNHCR works with refugee communities and assists the most vulnerable. Through the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR works with the government to support the inclusive refugee policies, in particular in health and education.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

In view of widespread instability in Afghanistan, as part of its protection mandate, UNHCR continues to advocate for an open and accessible asylum system for all. Some among the undocumented population may have international protection needs, particularly as the situation deteriorates in Afghanistan, for which they need to be properly screened and identified. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to advocate for the extension of temporary protection and documentation to this group, in particular the most vulnerable, who are also indirectly supported through the existing inclusive education and health programmes put in place by the Iranian Government and supported by UNHCR.

2.6 M
undocumented
Afghans

311,000
Passport with
valid visa

275,000
Afghan family
passport holders



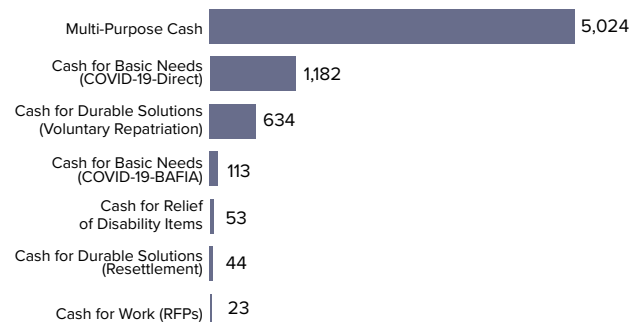
800,000
Afghan & Iraqi refugee
card holders

out of which
780,000
are Afghans &
20,000
are Iraqis

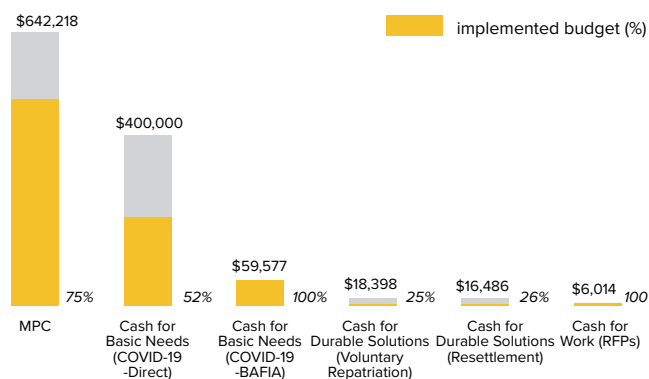
CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS

24,928 individuals (7,073 households) in total received cash assistance from UNHCR. Due to different vulnerabilities, some households received cash assistance more than one time.

CBI BENEFICIARIES BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



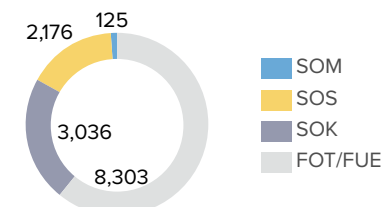
BUDGET BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

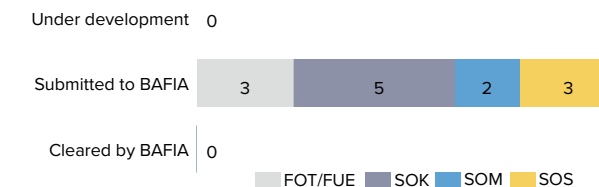
Given COVID-19, offices have largely been engaging with PoCs virtually/remotely. The topics covered include C19, the national vaccination plan, the mental impact of the pandemic, the 7th cycle of UPHI, livelihood opportunities & regulations, financial management, school enrolment, prevention of substance use, access to banking facilities, parenting and life skills. Due to the increased number of new arrivals approaching offices since mid-August, several offices have also been conducting in-person awareness raising sessions for new arrivals, with a focus on clarifying UNHCR's role in resettlement, complementary pathways, RSD and documentation, not to mention warning against fraudulent schemes.

REFUGEES ENGAGED IN AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES



13 community-based projects, developed by UNHCR offices, in collaboration with refugees and local authorities, were submitted to our central government counterpart for clearance (11 in late May and 2 in early August). The projects cover topics such as stress management and mental health during the pandemic, awareness raising and distribution of hygiene kits, virtual sports competitions for children, support to children engaged in child labor and positive parenting. Despite advocacy at several levels, no response has been provided on the projects, and therefore the respective budgets have had to be reallocated for 2021. UNHCR continues to advocate for the clearance of the projects for implementation in 2022.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS



RECEPTION

In the first nine months of 2021, **14,094** individuals contacted UNHCR more than one time (29,089 approaches), out of which 3,070 were newly registered in proGres. The large majority of them were refugees (Amayesh card holders 85%, asylum-seekers 10% and other of concern 5%). In addition to Afghan nationals approaching UNHCR for support, some Iraqis and other nationalities also contacted the offices.



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

It is estimated that one in five people in conflict-affected settings suffers from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, complicated grief, or other mental health conditions. In order to address the mental health needs of refugees approaching us, UNHCR Iran has contracted one Psycho-Social Counsellor (PSC) per office (excl. one office), to provide part-time individual and group counselling services to PoCs in need. The data below only covers the second and third quarter of 2021 (April-September).

200

Psychosocial support beneficiaries



CHILD PROTECTION (CP)

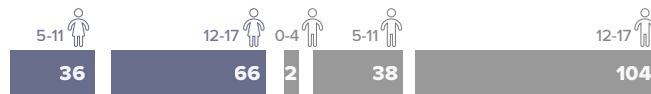
Protection risks for children from vulnerable families continue to be reported across the country. Number of cases with CP/GBV claims is concerning, including school drop-outs, child labour, forced/early marriage, physical assaults and domestic violence. In the absence of CP partners and working relations with State Welfare Organization, the scope of UNHCR's work with regard to CP remained limited.

The new Nationality Law: Around 30,000 applicants have so far filed applications to receive Iranian nationality, out of which, Shenanameh (birth certificates) have been issued only for around 5,000 children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers. The needed security check are understood to be the main slowing reason of the process.

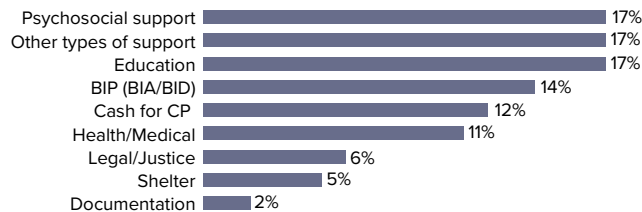
Education: UNHCR has not yet started distribution of 21,500 tablets bought to facilitate access of vulnerable children to virtual education. The new school year started on 23rd of September. According to the civil society activists' reports, late implementation, and late announcement of the circular for implementation of 2015 decree of the Supreme Leader and delayed issuance of the education slips resulted in inability of many Afghan student to enroll in schools.

247

reported child at risk



TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRALS



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

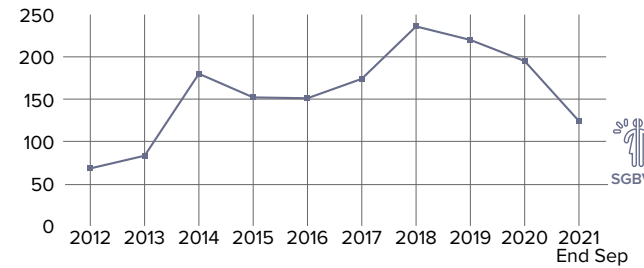
There are indications that GBV incidents have increased across the country since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, i.e. the State Welfare Organization reported a significant rise in child abuse cases, calls to hotlines for family disputes and psychological violence in different provinces. The number of survivors who reported to UNHCR as of end September 2021 (124 individuals) is lower than the number of individuals reporting during the same period in 2020 (136 individuals). Limitations in terms of mobility or privacy, caused or worsened by the pandemic, and therefore lack of access to reporting channels may be among the reasons that could explain why a large increase in incidents has not been reflected in UNHCR's statistics.

124

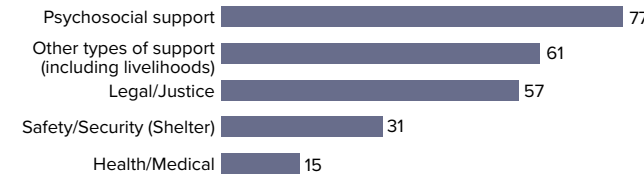
reported GBV survivors



TREND: REPORTED SGBV SURVIVORS



SGBV RESPONSE



LEGAL SERVICES

In the first nine months of 2021, the majority of the cases that UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs) supported, concerned "Family law matters" and "Criminal matters". "Family disputes", followed by "Financial disputes" and "Wage-related disputes" were the three most frequent areas that Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) intervened on. Although refugees have full access to Iranian courts, in principle, the DSCs offer an alternative dispute resolution mechanism to complement judicial processes by finding amicable solutions in civil matters involving refugees.

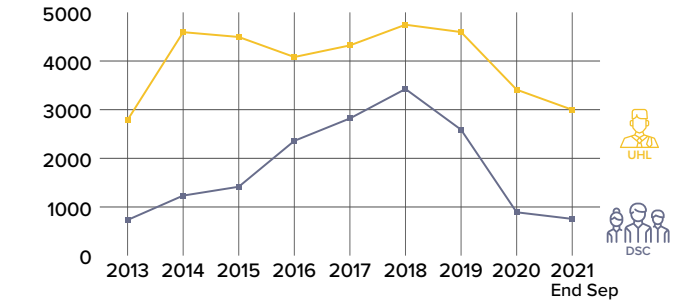
755 PoCs supported through

2,998 PoCs supported by

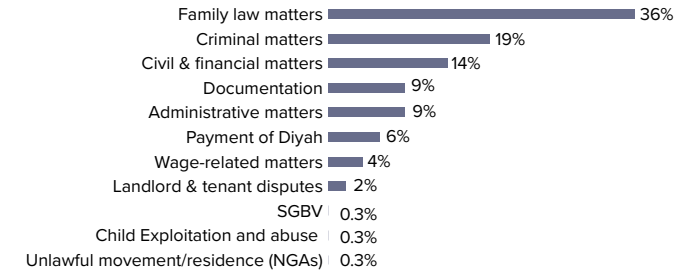
16 Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs)

17 UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs)

TREND: UHL & DSC CASES



UHL TYPES OF CASES



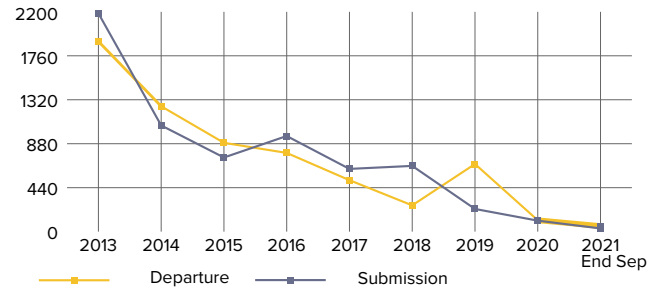
RESETTLEMENT

By end September 2021, UNHCR Iran has received no RST quota yet. Using the countries unallocated quota, the office submitted 5 cases/10 individuals to Sweden, 4 cases/9 individuals to Norway and 4 cases/13 individuals to Finland through HQ (totally, 13 cases, 32 individuals). During this period, 3 cases/6 individuals were accepted by Sweden, 4 cases/9 individuals by Norway, 1 family of 4 individuals by New Zealand, as well as 6 cases/19 individuals by Iceland. Resettlement departures gained momentum. From Jan. to Sep 2021, 6 cases/12 individuals departed to Sweden, 3 cases of 6 individuals left for Norway, 4 cases/20 individuals departed to UK, and 3 cases/18 individuals left for New Zealand (totally, 16 cases, 56 individuals).

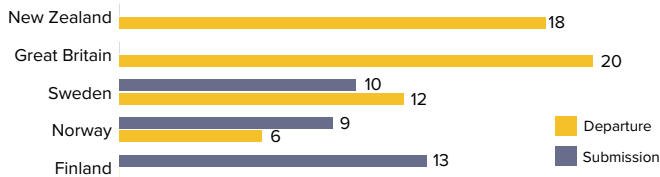
32 submitted to the hosting countries for consideration
56 departed to the hosting countries



TREND: RESETTLEMENT



SUBMISSION AND DEPARTED COUNTRIES



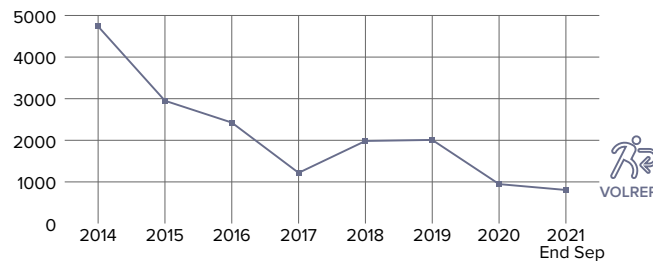
VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Between January to September 2021 UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 800 Afghans and 6 Iraqis to their home country. This represents an increase in the yearly trend compared to the 630 UNHCR facilitated returns during the same period in 2020. Considering the size of the Afghan population in Iran, the overall number of registered refugees returning to Afghanistan remains very low. Following the issuance of the non-return advisory for Afghanistan on 16 August, UNHCR remains cautious and continues to provide enhanced counselling to prospective returnees on the situation in their final destinations and routes thereto, particularly to those with more vulnerable profiles, on a case by case basis. 60% of Afghans repatriated with the intent of obtaining an Afghan passport and Iranian visa to pursue higher education in Iran.

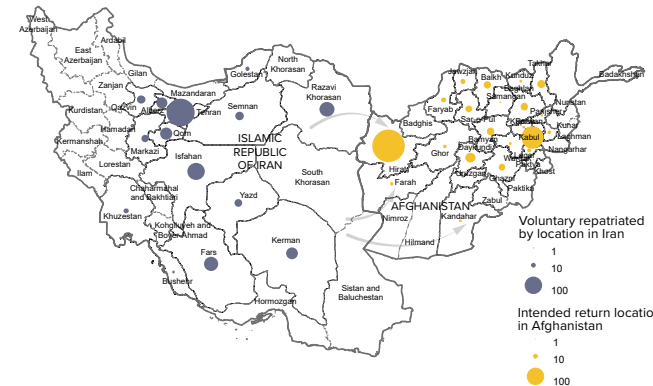
800 Afghan refugees voluntary repatriated (including students)
6 Iraqi refugee voluntary repatriated



TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION



REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN



ARREST, DETENTION & DEPORTATION (ADD)

Whilst UNHCR keeps track of Arrest, Detention and Deportation (ADD) incidents directly reported to UNHCR by affected PoCs (mostly relatives of deportees), these incidents represent a minimal portion of the total number of deportations taking place from Iran. From January to September 2021, only 35 ADD incidents concerning 68 individuals were directly reported to UNHCR. "Illegal border crossing (onward movement)" was the main reason of arrest, followed by "Irregular movement to Iran (new arrivals)" and "Not having valid document". Afghans without valid documentation are at risk of being arrested, detained, and deported. Amayesh Card holders must obtain a Laissez-Passer (travel permit) from BAFIA authorities for traveling outside their designated province of residence. As per figures made publicly available by authorities in national media outlets 140,710 undocumented Afghans were deported only between 21 March and 8 of July representing an 85% increase in deportations countrywide compared to last year.

68 individuals

TREND: ADD

