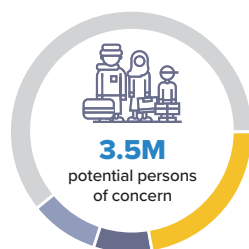


The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, first opened its office in Iran in 1984 and has since maintained an uninterrupted field presence countrywide. 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 (PoC)

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.

2.1 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

RECEPTION

In the first three months of 2022, **10,371** individuals contacted UNHCR more than one time (14,911 approaches), out of which 4,661 were newly registered in proGres. The large majority of them were refugees (Amayesh card holders 82%, asylum-seekers 13% and other of concern 5%). In addition to Afghan nationals approaching UNHCR for support, some Iraqis and other nationalities also contacted the offices.

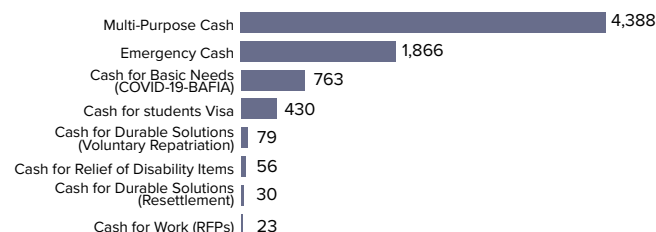


2% of the PoCs used other means of approach to UNHCR.

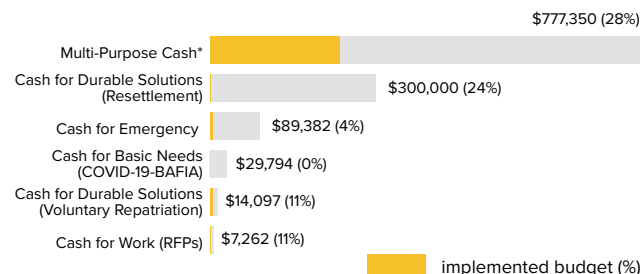
CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS

7,635 individuals (2,444 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



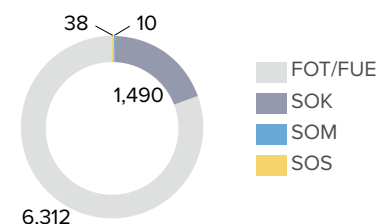
* It also includes Cash for students Visa and Cash for Relief of Disability Items.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION (CBP)

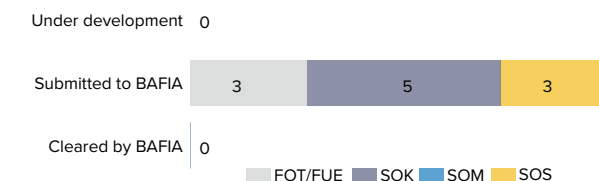
The community-based protection seeks to ensure that refugees are empowered and their resilient capacity is strengthened, enabling them to minimize their exposure to protection risks and improve their overall protection environment, focusing on the most vulnerable among them. Furthermore, CBP interventions intend to see communities with enhanced capacities and better access to services through meaningful participation of individuals and groups of various ages, genders, and backgrounds, particularly by women and youth. In this regard, the CBP team of UNHCR Iran conducted various Missions, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and other means of communication where a total of 6,377 PoCs were reached out in person and 1,473 PoCs were approached virtually from January till March 2022. With the continued COVID-19 situation, various innovative measures have been identified and put in place to ensure unhindered communication with refugees, such as the expansion of the UNHCR helpline, implementation of the Iran help page, and recently ongoing exercise to launch the What's App chatbot all of which is intended to enhance UNHCR access with refugees.

During all these varied communication processes, a variety of issues have been raised by PoCs, including challenges in digital connectivity impacting access to education for children (lack of devices and unaffordability of internet), continued need for hygiene/ PPE items, loss of livelihoods and its impact on families, the unaffordability of the UPHI premium, risk of domestic violence as well as the need for vaccinations, etc. The CBP team will continue its interaction with BAFIA and with other relevant agencies to continue addressing the issues raised by refugees.

REFUGEES ENGAGED IN AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES



COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS



PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

Displacement has a profound impact on people and their communities. People who flee their homes are particularly vulnerable to emotional stress. 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. To address the mental health needs of refugees approaching us, UNHCR Iran has contracted one Psycho-Social Counsellor (PSC) per office, to provide part-time individual and group counseling services to PoCs in need. Priority is given to survivors of GBV, but also survivors of torture and trauma, cases of attempted suicide, survivors and perpetrators of child abuse, substance users, and others. In consultation with UNHCR, and with the consent of PoCs, the PSCs may make referrals to the other specialists and/or the national system.

350

Psychosocial support beneficiaries



CHILD PROTECTION (CP)

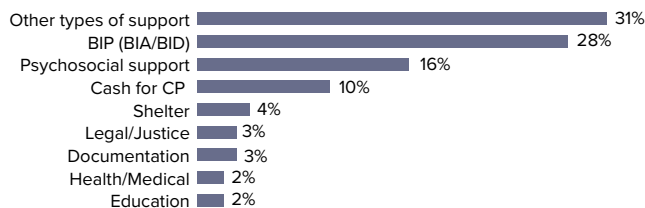
Protection risks for children from vulnerable families continue to be reported across the country. Number of cases with CP/GBV claims is concerning, including school drop-outs, child labour, forced/early marriage, physical assaults and domestic violence. Since the start of unrest in Afghanistan, a new profile of UASC is observed more than before in Iran: the children are either separated from their parents who are still in Afghanistan and ended in Iran usually irregularly or whose parents engaged in onward movement to West but did not manage to take them for various reasons. In the absence of CP partners and working relations with State Welfare Organization, the scope of UNHCR's work with regard to this group and other children remains limited. New opportunities might rise in near future to find durable solution for some of the UASC children in framework of RST, while BID procedures are already in place and will be strengthened.

112

reported child at risk



TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRALS



GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

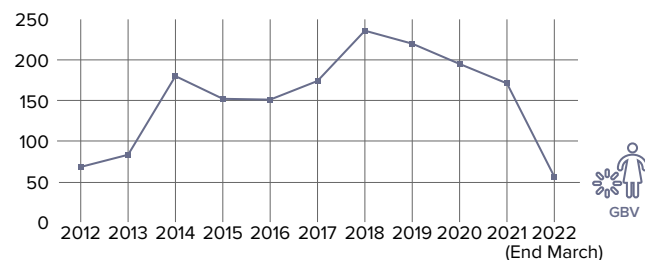
Afghan women and girls and other vulnerable groups are at heightened risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, child or forced marriage and intimate partner violence. UNHCR continue to provide comprehensive GBV case management support to survivors who approach UNHCR offices. 32.2% were physical assaults cases, 15% were rape, another 15% were physiological and emotional abuse, 12.5% forced marriage. Other incidents were reported to a lesser extent such as sexual assault, denial of resources, sexual harassment and sale and exchange of sex. The majority of GBV survivors are women (91%), while only 5% of reported cases were perpetrated against girls and 4% against men. GBV remains underreported but known to happen in all contexts, including in Iran where Afghan refugees are particularly at risk. This is compounded by the limited knowledge by refugees of the procedures to access services and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination.

56

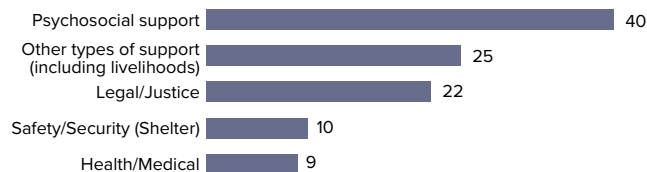
reported GBV survivors



TREND: REPORTED SGBV SURVIVORS



SGBV RESPONSE



LEGAL SERVICES

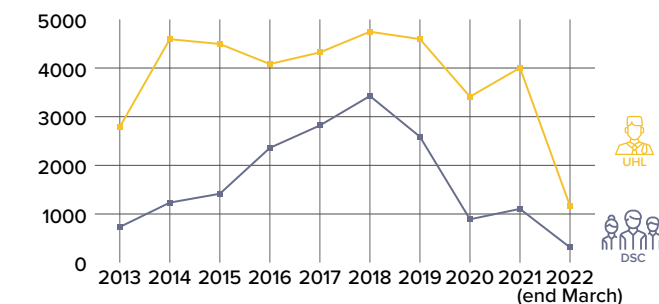
For the first quarter of 2022, The number of consultations provided by UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs) represents a slight decrease (10%) compared to the same period last year. The majority of the cases that UHLs supported, concerned "Family law matters", "Criminal matters" and "Civil and financial matters". Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) approaches increased slightly by 9% compared to the same period in 2021 mostly due to a more limited number of active DSCs due to Covid-19 restrictions last year. "Family disputes", followed by "Financial disputes" and "Wage-related disputes" were the three most frequent areas that DSCs intervened in. Although refugees have access to Iranian courts, the DSCs offer an alternative and free-of-charge dispute resolution mechanism that complements judicial processes by finding amicable solutions in civil matters involving refugees.

313 PoCs supported through

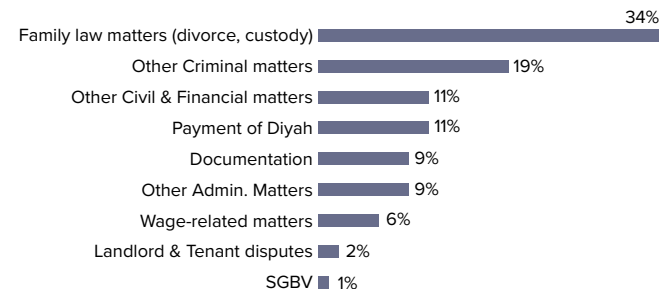
1,165 PoCs supported by

16 Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) 17 UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs)

TREND: UHL & DSC CASES



UHL TYPES OF CASES



RESETTLEMENT

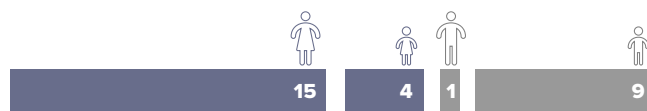
UNHCR Iran has tentatively received 3000 resettlement quota for refugees who reside in Iran during 2022. Using the allocated and unallocated quota, from January to end March 2022 (first quarter of 2022), the office submitted 119 individuals for resettlement consideration to third countries as follows: Australia (100), Finland (1), Norway (15) and Sweden (3). In the same reporting period, 29 individuals departed for resettlement to Australia (1), Finland (7), New Zealand (10) and Sweden (11).

119

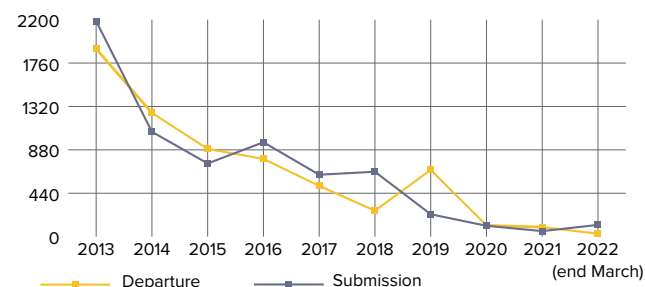
submitted to the hosting countries for consideration

29

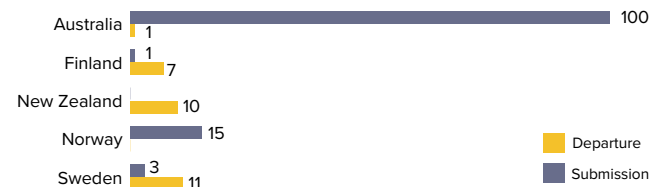
departed to the hosting countries



TREND: RESETTLEMENT



SUBMISSION AND DEPARTED COUNTRIES



VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

By the end of March 2022, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of 78 returnees to Afghanistan and one returnee to Iraq. This represents a decrease compared to the 434 returns facilitated in the same period in 2021. Voluntary repatriation declined by 82% compared to March 2021. This decrease is due to the instability and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

78

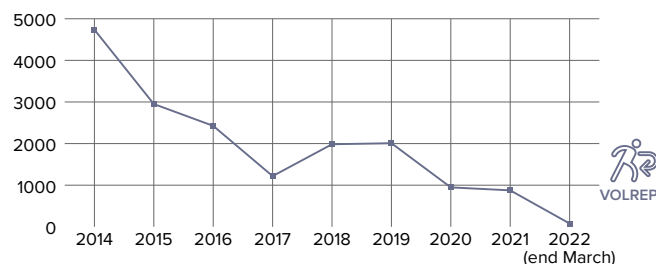
Afghan refugees voluntary repatriated (including students)

1

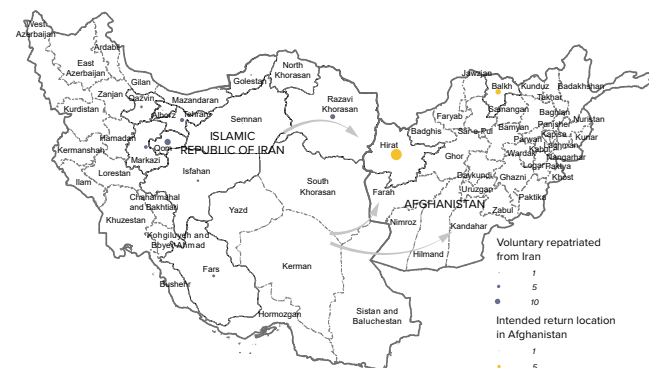
Iraqi refugee voluntary repatriated



TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION



REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN



ARREST, DETENTION & DEPORTATION (ADD)

ADD incidents directly reported to UNHCR by affected PoCs (or relatives on their behalf) represent a minimal portion of the total number of ADD incidents taking place in Iran. During the reporting period, only 14 ADD incidents concerning 18 individuals were directly reported to UNHCR on grounds of irregular border crossing and lack of valid documentation. Indeed, Afghans without valid documentation are at risk of arrest, detention, and deportation in Iran. *Amayesh* Card holders must obtain a Laissez-Passer (travel permit) from BAFIA authorities for traveling outside their designated province of residence. During the reporting period, undocumented Afghans and also those not carrying their documentation at the time of apprehension, continued to be the target of roundup operations by law enforcement authorities. Key informants reported that detainees are not abruptly deported but undergo a screening process following which some are released and allowed to remain in the country. Key informants also reported an increase in the deportation trend as an increasing number of Afghans succeed to enter Iran. This increasing deportation trend is believed to be linked to deteriorating perceptions around Afghans negatively impacting the economy and local populations' access to job opportunities. Furthermore, xenophobic messages circulated in media outlets seem to have exacerbated a pattern by which law enforcement authorities apply legal stay/residency regulations more strictly.

18

individuals

TREND: ADD

