IRAN PROTECTION DASHBOARD
JAN TO **JUN 2022**

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.

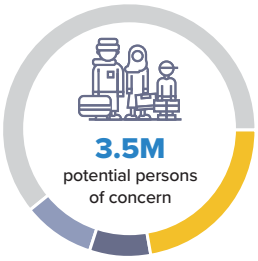
POPULATION OF CONCERN (PoC)

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

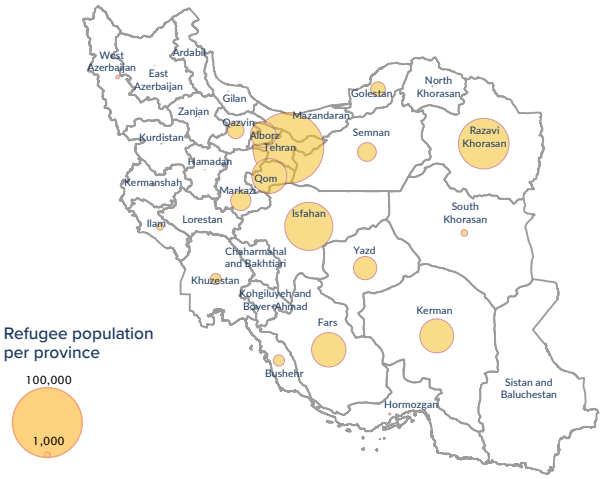
275,000
Afghan family passport holders



800,000
Afghan & Iraqi refugee card holders

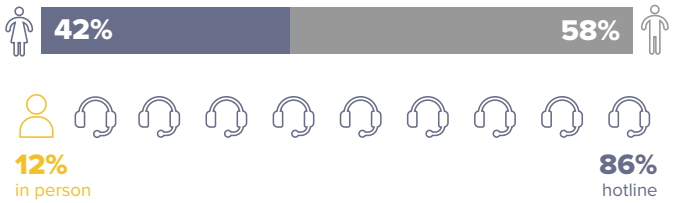
out of which
780,000
are Afghans &
20,000
are Iraqis

REFUGEE POPULATION PER PROVINCE



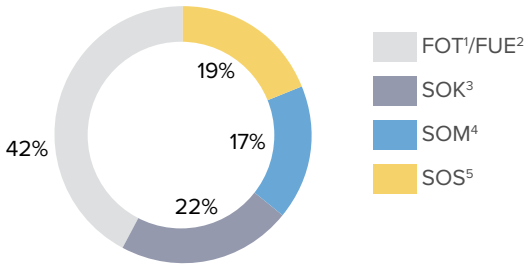
RECEPTION

In the second quarter of 2022, **18,307** individuals contacted UNHCR more than one time (32,853 approaches), out of which 13,030 were newly registered in proGres. The large majority of them were asylum-seekers (asylum-seekers 52%, *Amayesh* card holders 44% and other of concern 4%).
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.

APROACHES BY OFFICES

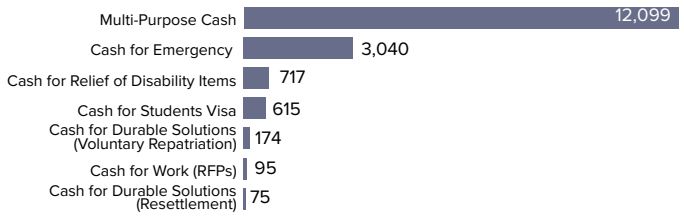


1. FOT stands for Field office Tehran
2. FUE stands for Field unit Esfahan
3. SOK stands for Sub-office Kerman
4. SOM stands for Sub-office Mashhad
5. SOS stands for Sub-office Shiraz

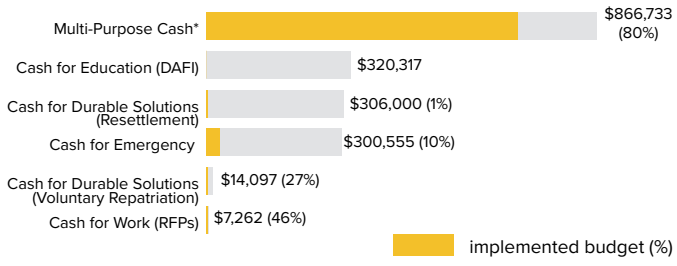
CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS

15,753 individuals related to 4,432 households in total received cash assistance from January to end of June 2022 from UNHCR. Due to different vulnerabilities, some households received cash assistance more than one time.

ASSISTED POPULATION BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



BUDGET BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



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

According to the data received from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in October 2020, 800,000 refugee card holders reside in Iran. UNHCR has been in continuous engagement with the authorities in relation to these figures since October 2020. In view of the absence of updated data, UNHCR sought to estimate the changes in the refugee population considering the natural growth and onward movements, coming up with the following estimation for the end of 2021: a total of around 770,000 refugees (out of which 750,000 would be Afghans and 20,000 Iraqis).

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION (CBP)

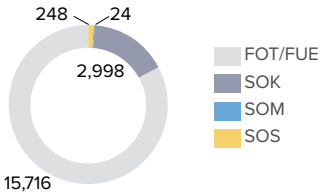
AWARENESS RAISING AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The community-based protection seeks to ensure that refugees are empowered, and their capacities and resilience are strengthened, enabling them to minimize their exposure to protection risks and improve their overall protection environment. 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 16,040 PoCs were reached out in person and 2,946 PoCs were approached virtually from January till June 2022. UNHCR offices have organized 55 awareness raising and information dissemination activities, focused on celebration of World Refugee Day, providing information regarding UNHCR services, headcount exercise, resettlement, information on bank related issues for new arrivals, hygiene awareness raising, parenting issues and communication skills.

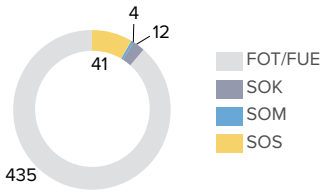
With the continued COVID-19 situation, various innovative measures have been taken and put in place to ensure unhindered communication with refugees, such as the expansion of the UNHCR hotline, UNHCR Instagram account, implementation of UNHCR Iran Help page, and recently ongoing exercise to launch the WhatsApp chatbot.

A variety of issues have been raised by PoCs, including financial challenges due to the inflation, need for hygiene items, unaffordability of the health insurance premium, and reduced access to livelihood opportunities. Finally, each office identified one specific protection activity to be submitted to BAFIA, focused on address hygiene awareness, mental health issues and education.

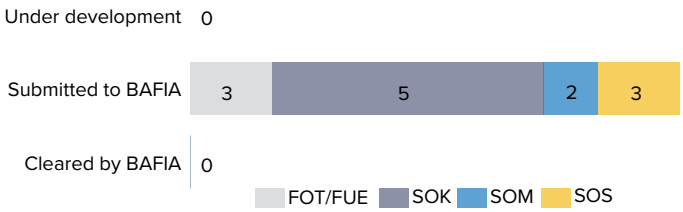
POCS ENGAGED BY OFFICES



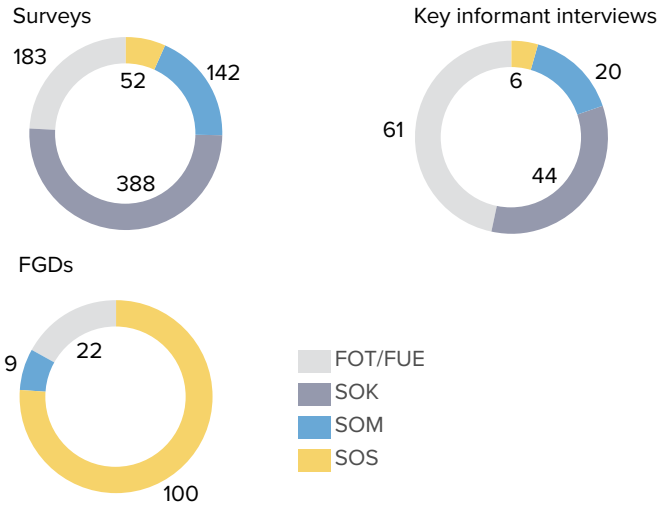
NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES BY OFFICES



COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS



NUMBER OF PARTICIPATORY DATA COLLECTION EXERCISES CONDUCTED



During this period, there was one community workshop in SOM. There were also 9 participatory assesments in SOM and one in FOT. Another participatory data collection took place in FOT, it was regarding child protection with the presence of 5 NGOs and one refugee.

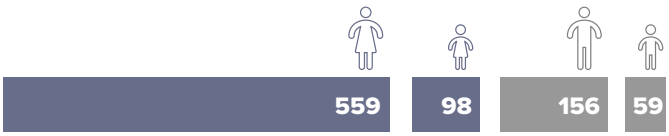
PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

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 counseling 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, if needed. UNHCR is working on strengthening the network of PSCs in the country to harmonize their approach, services and capacitate them for a better service delivery.

872

Psycho-social support beneficiaries

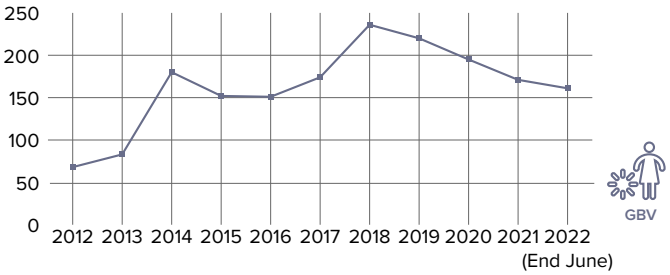


GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

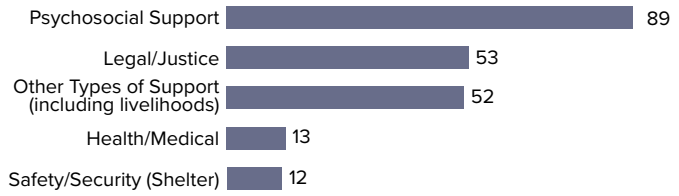
There are indications that GBV incidents have been on the rise country wide. The incidents reported in the second quarter increased compared to the first quarter as per the observations and reports from the field offices. This increase can be attributed, on the one hand, to the more in-depth interviews conducted on protection needs (asking more in-depth questions to create the conditions for PoCs to report incidents), the increase in the number of resettlement interviews, and, on the other hand, to the impact of the pandemic and the deterioration of the economic situation, which led to a loss/reduction of regular income, employment opportunities, and possible deterioration of mental health. The most prevalent categories of GBV included physical assault (33%), rape (17%), sexual assault (17%), and psychological and emotional abuse (16%). The overwhelming majority (95%) of GBV survivors are women and girls. During the reporting period, eight GBV survivors were referred to Technical and Vocational Training courses. The GBV response is becoming more integrated thanks to a closer collaboration with the livelihood unit, which resulted in the referral of 8 GBV survivors to the Technical and Vocational Training courses during the reporting period.

161
Reported GBV survivors

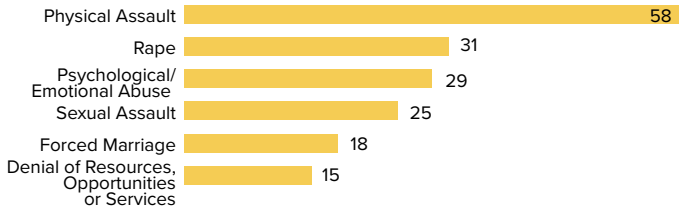
TREND: REPORTED GBV SURVIVORS OVER THE YEARS



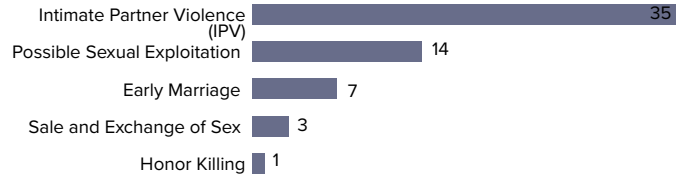
GBV TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED



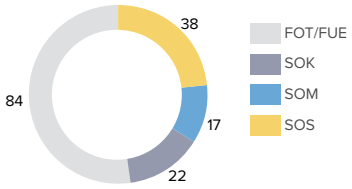
INCIDENT TYPES



GBV CASE CONTEXT



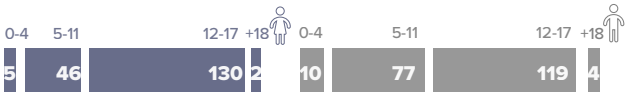
NUMBER OF GBV SURVIVORS IDENTIFIED BY OFFICES



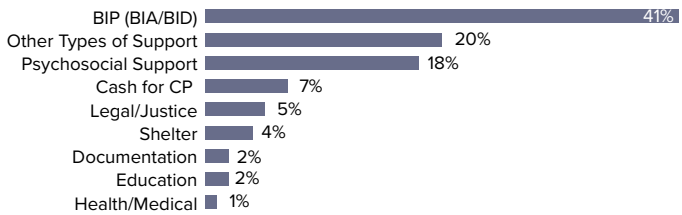
CHILD PROTECTION (CP)

Based on field offices' reports, protection risks are very present among PoCs in the Iranian context. Afghan children are engaged in child labor in many places and a decline in the economic welfare of the families in the past months has resulted in more child labor. Additionally, many of the children are experiencing challenges with regard to access to education (574 cases reported) which is a result of financial problems and engagement in child labor, but also challenges to enroll in school in Iran, despite all supporting mechanisms. Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) are among the most vulnerable groups of Afghans residing in Iran considering the limited immediate and durable solutions for them in the absence of strong partnership with local NGOs and State Welfare Organization (SWO) in the area of child protection and alternative care options. The reported number of children at risk doubled compared to the previous quarter (from 112 to 393): this can be a result of declined protection of the children but also of improved reporting through better identification and recording. UNHCR is planning to further strengthen the identification and provision of CP services as in the areas of cash and continued advocacy to secure a partnership with SWO.

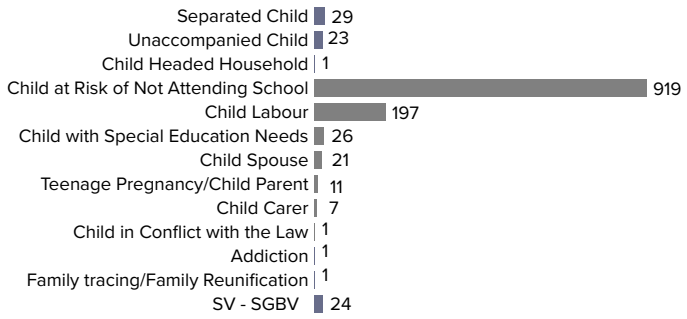
393
Reported children at risk



TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRALS

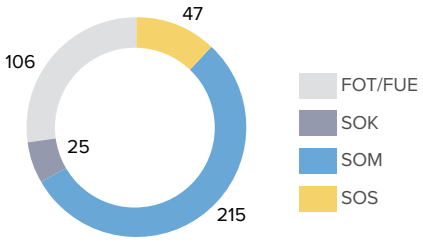


TYPES OF SPECIFIC NEEDS



In the chart above, one child may fall under several of these specific needs categories.

CHILD AT RISK BY OFFICES



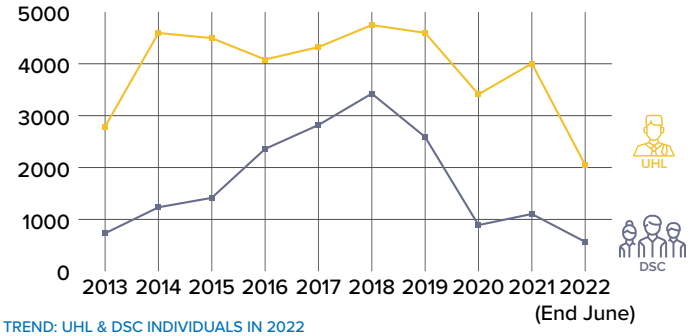
LEGAL SERVICES

For the first half of 2022, the number of consultations provided by UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs) represents a slight increase (3%) 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 13% 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.

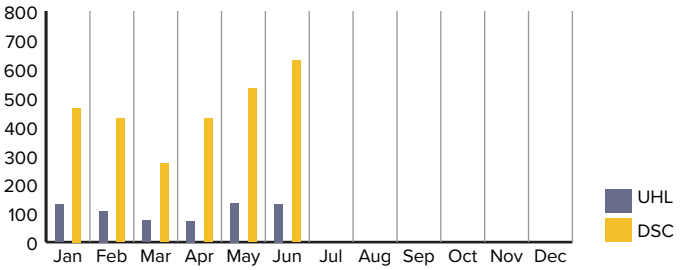
568 PoCs supported through **16** Dispute Settlement Comittees

2,048 PoCs supported by **17** UNHCR Hired Lawyers

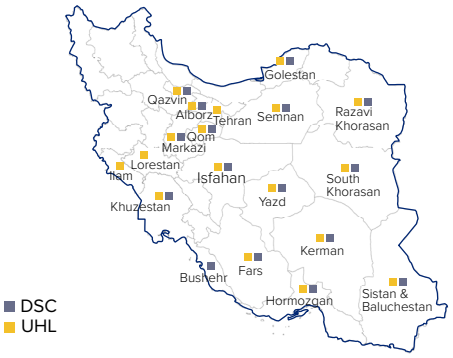
TREND: UHL & DSC BENEFICIARIES OVER THE YEARS



TREND: UHL & DSC INDIVIDUALS IN 2022

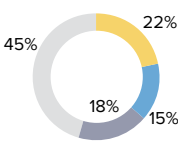


UHL & DSC LOCATIONS

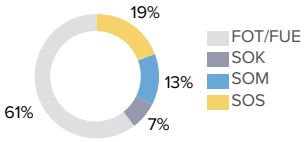


Note: The markers on the map indicate presence of UHL and/or DSC in provinces.

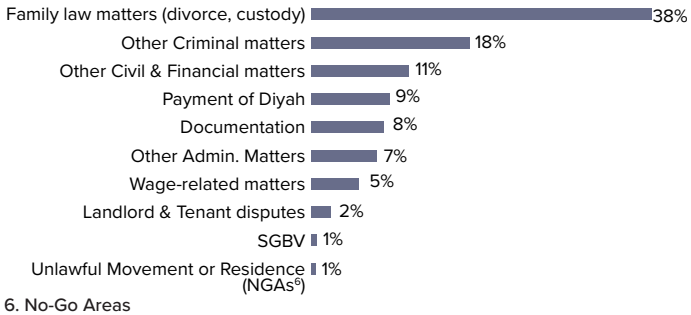
DSC BENEFICIARIES/OFFICES



UHL BENEFICIARIES/OFFICES



UHL TYPE OF CASES



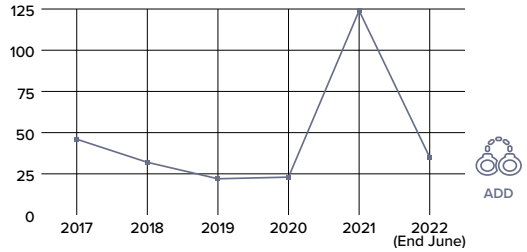
6. No-Go Areas

ARREST, DETENTION & DEPORTATION (ADD)

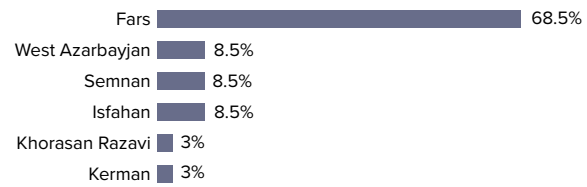
ADD incidents directly reported to UNHCR by affected PoCs (or relatives on their behalf) represent a minimal portion of the total number of ADD incidents taking place Iran. During the reporting period, only 26 ADD incidents concerning 35 individuals were directly reported to UNHCR on grounds of irregular 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.

35
individuals

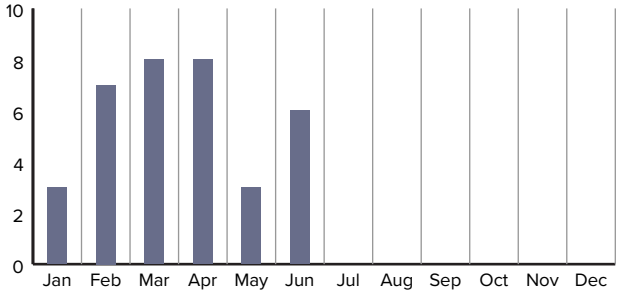
TREND: ADD CASES OVER THE YEARS



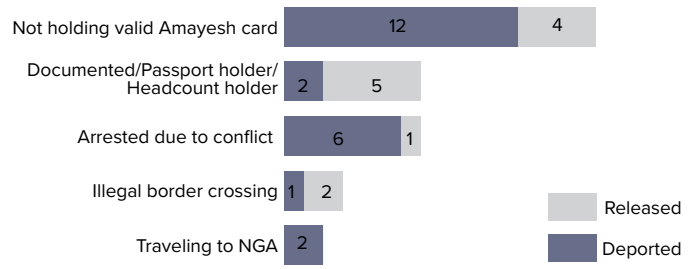
PLACE OF ARREST



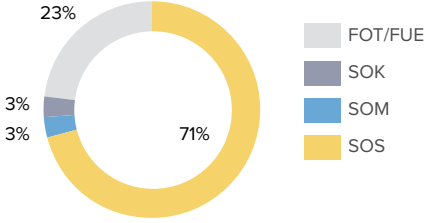
TREND: ADD CASES IN 2022



REASON OF ARREST



ADD CASES PER OFFICES

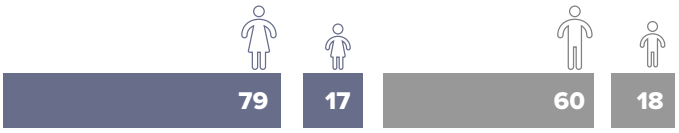


VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

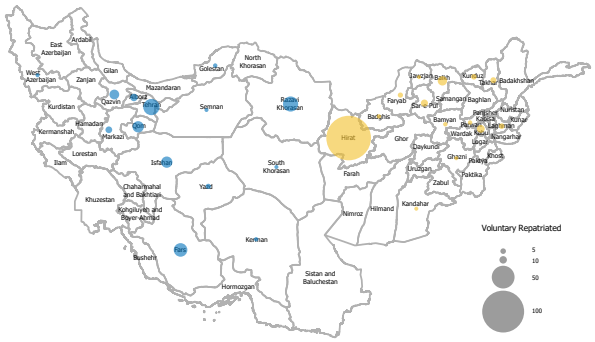
By the end of June, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of 173 returnees to Afghanistan and one returnee to Iraq. This represents a substantial decrease compared to the 706 returns facilitated in the same period in 2021. Voluntary repatriation declined by 75% compared to the same period in 2021. This decrease is due to the instability and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

173
Afghan refugees voluntary repatriated (including students)

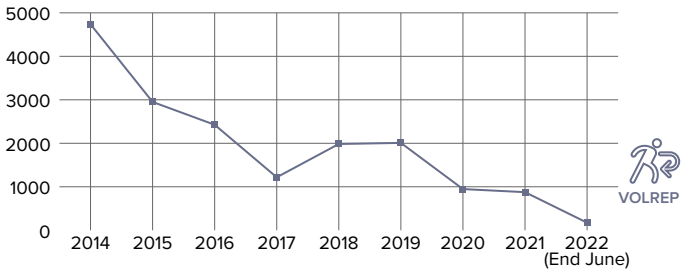
1
Iraqi refugee voluntary repatriated



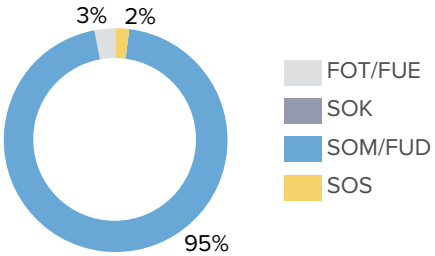
REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN



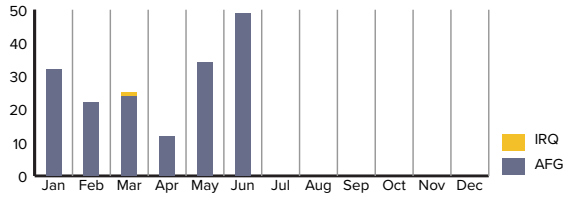
TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OVER THE YEARS



PROCESSED BY OFFICES



TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION IN 2022

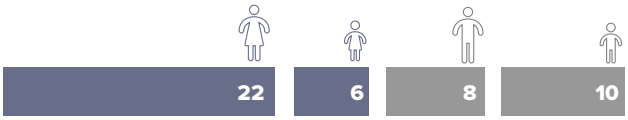


RESETTLEMENT

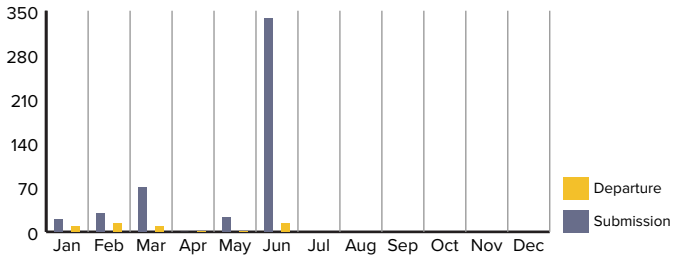
UNHCR Iran has tentatively received 3,000 resettlement quotas for 2022. From January to end June 2022, the office submitted 480 individuals for resettlement consideration to third countries. In the same reporting period, 46 individuals departed on resettlement.

480
refugees submitted to resettlement countries for consideration

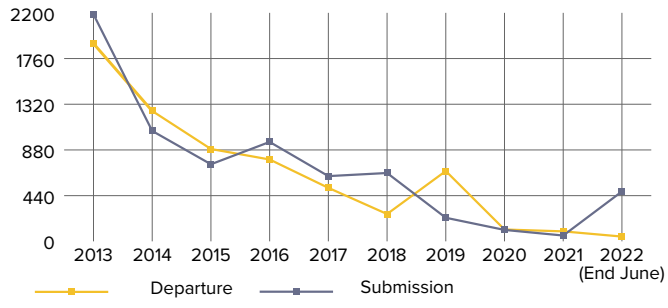
46
refugees departed to the resettlement countries



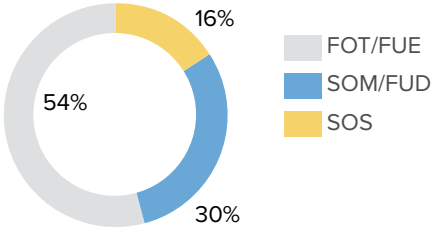
TREND: RESETTLEMENT IN 2022



TREND: RESETTLEMENT OVER THE YEARS



DEPARTED INDIVIDUALS BY UNHCR OFFICES



PRIORITY OF SUBMISSION:
53 urgent/427 normal