In 2023, 12,795 Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan (97% from Pakistan), with the third quarter alone registering 54% of this year’s returns. The 2023 overall return figure, is over three times higher than the one recorded during the same period in 2022 (3,717 individuals). 2022 registered a total of 6,424 Afghan refugee returns (which was five times higher than the overall returns in 2021).

Returnees stated that even if the economic reasons for return movements still mean a lot in decision-making, the statements on shrinking protection space, continuous harassment and bribing by police, and negative media coverage, influenced the decision to return. In 2023, 60% of the refugees returned to 5 provinces: Kabul (20%), Kunduz (14%), Kandahar (10%), Balkh (8%) and Nangarhar (8%). 95% of the interviewed returnees obtained information about the situation in Afghanistan, including on security in areas of origin, before deciding to return. Considering the current asylum context in Pakistan, this will show the level of informed decision among Voluntary Repatriation cases.

At Encashment Centres in Afghanistan, returning refugees receive a cash grant of USD 375 per individual. As of 1 August 2022, UNHCR adjusted the cash grant amount from USD 250 to USD 375 per person due to an increase in living/transportation costs in Afghanistan. In addition, due to the current economic instability in Afghanistan, refugee families returning after 1 January 2023 will receive a one-time supplemental reintegration cash grant approximately 3 months after arrival in their areas of origin/intended destination. This grant is intended to support reintegration by extending financial support for three additional months. Returnee families (of two or more people) receive USD 700 or USD 350 (for single individuals, or if part of the family arrived, the remaining USD 350 will be issued, if/when the family arrives). Returnees may also access programmes and projects implemented by UNHCR in priority areas of return and reintegration. In the first 3 months of 2023, 1,377 individuals who have returned, received CARE grants. Distribution of CARE grants for those who returned between April - June is currently ongoing.

### Returns Processed at the Encashment Centres in Afghanistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returns from July-Sep. 2023</th>
<th>Returns in 2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6,959</td>
<td>12,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 from Iran</td>
<td>395 from Iran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,773 from Pakistan</td>
<td>12,283 from Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 from Other Countries</td>
<td>117 from Other Countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Returnee Demographics 2023

- 81% of the returnees are Women and Children
- 17% aged 12 - 17
- 20% aged 60+
- 12% aged 5 - 11

### Assistance at Encashment Centres (ECs) in Afghanistan

USD 2.7M was provided in cash assistance to returnees at ECs in Q3 of 2023. A total of USD 4.9M was provided in 2023.

Besides cash grants, returning refugees receive basic health care, vaccination for children, mine risk education, access to waiting areas and playgrounds for children, as well as, overnight accommodation when needed. They may also receive other services, provided by other partners present in each EC.

### Province of Destination 2023

- **117** Returns from other Countries
- **395** Returns from Iran
- **12,283** Returns from Pakistan
AFGHANISTAN SITUATION
Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees | Quarterly Update

REASONS AND INTENTIONS RELATED TO RETURN

Top 5 reasons for leaving Iran and Pakistan

- High costs of living/ high rent: 92%
- No employment opportunities: 80%
- Strict border entry requirements: 56%
- Fear of arrest and/or deportation: 32%
- Seasonal weather conditions: 12%

Top 5 reasons for not returning to Area of Origin

- To reunite with relatives: 23%
- Lack of land: 18%
- Lack of housing/shelter: 17%
- Lack of income opportunities: 16%
- Lack of basic services: 5%

Top 5 reasons for return to Afghanistan

- Improvement in security situation: 86%
- Reunion with family/relatives in Afghanistan: 70%
- Land allocation scheme and/or shelter program: 31%
- No longer have a fear of persecution: 10%
- Improved weather conditions for agriculture activities: 6%

Concerns related to the return to Afghanistan

- Lack of shelter: 62%
- Lack of job opportunities: 47%
- Lack of land: 37%
- N/A: I don't have any concerns: 27%
- Lack of document (ID/Tazkera): 19%

After cash grant is spent, how you plan to support your family?

- Rely on daily wage work: 75%
- Will rely on extended family: 26%
- Open a small business: 6%
- Other: 3%

Interviewed returnees' skills/qualifications

- No skill: 21%
- Tailoring: 18%
- Unskilled daily wage labor: 17%
- Shop keeper: 14%
- Agriculture (Farming): 9%
- Embroidery: 7%
- Masonry (semi-skilled): 5%
- Waste picking: 5%
- Transport / driver: 3%
- Teaching: 3%

Upon return, how the cash grant will be spent

- Buy food and other commodities: 76%
- Paying transportation cost: 58%
- Rent accommodation: 39%
- Investment in livelihoods: 29%
- Payback loans: 15%

Living arrangements upon return

- I will rent a house: 47%
- I will stay with relatives: 32%
- I will stay in my own house: 19%
- Other: 1%

REGISTERED VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION TO AFGHANISTAN 2002-2023

REGISTERED VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION (zoomed in 2020-2023)

For further information please visit the Afghanistan Situation Operational Portal or please contact RBAPDIMA@unhcr.org.