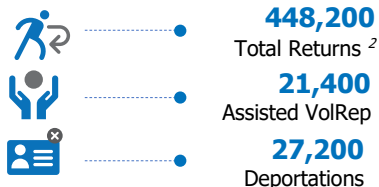


Key Figures (from 15 Sept to date)



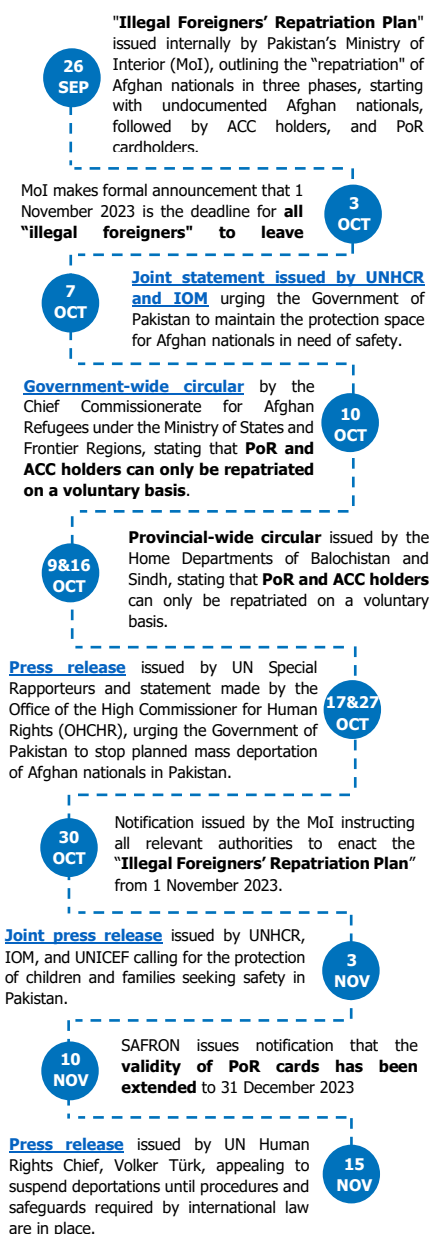
UNHCR Funding Requirement

\$43.48M for Afghanistan from November 2023 to July 2024

\$8.43M for Pakistan from November to December 2023

The quoted figures are currently under revision.

Timeline of Key Events



Source: [UNHCR-IOM Joint Update #8](#)

Background

On 3 October 2023, the Government of Pakistan announced plans to repatriate "illegal foreigners".¹ In view of the ongoing humanitarian and human rights concerns in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls, UNHCR and IOM issued a [joint statement](#) urging Pakistan to maintain the protection space for Afghans in need of safety. This was followed by a [joint statement](#) by UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF which appealed for the protection of children and families seeking safety in Pakistan. On 10 November, UNHCR declared an internal Level 2 emergency for Pakistan and Afghanistan for six months to scale up the humanitarian response in light of the rapidly evolving situation.

Population trends during the reporting period indicate that most Afghans made the decision to leave Pakistan following the announcement of the repatriation plan although deportations through Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossing points have also been also recorded. People arriving at the border are exhausted and require urgent assistance as well as psychosocial support. Arrivals back to Afghanistan are adding to the worsening humanitarian crisis, as winter temperatures start to dip to -4°C in some locations. Many Afghan returnees are vulnerable, including women and children, who could lose their lives in a harsh winter if left without adequate shelter.

1.3 million undocumented Afghans are estimated to reside in Pakistan. Approximately 720,000 undocumented individuals and 50,000 assisted Proof of Registration (PoR) cardholders) are expected to require support at border points from now through July 2024. The sudden surge in returns in recent weeks is putting pressure on already strained resources, including shelter and basic services. Additional support is urgently needed. UNHCR and partners in Pakistan and Afghanistan are currently working together to ensure a harmonized and coordinated cross-border response to this new emergency. To support these efforts, an inter-agency [Border Consortium Appeal](#) was launched on 8 November and recently updated. In addition, UNHCR and partners are also stepping up their presence in and around Torkham and Chaman border crossing points and accelerating efforts to ensure protection-sensitive mechanisms are in place via regular border monitoring visits and protection screenings to identify and assist people with heightened vulnerabilities and needs.

UNHCR maintains a [non-return advisory](#) for Afghanistan, which has been in place since August 2021, and continues to call for a bar on the forced returns of Afghan nationals to a country still impacted by recurrent conflict, instability and climate-induced disasters. UNHCR continues to appeal to the Government of Pakistan to maintain the protection space for Afghan nationals in need of safety and that any returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified with full respect for rights and protection of those in need.

Key Highlights

The number of returnees entering **Afghanistan** from **Pakistan continued to decline during the reporting period**. While deportation figures remained high, the average number of border crossings for the past week has come down to 204. A small but growing number of unofficial crossings have also been reported. From 21 December, UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation Centers (VRCs) will begin operating three days a week (Monday to Wednesday).

¹ The Government of Pakistan has subsequently announced that Afghan Citizen Cardholders and Proof of Registration (PoR) cardholders are exempted. The validity of PoR cards was retroactively extended to the end of the year.

² An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted VolRep and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented.

- While the number of returnees crossing Pakistan to Afghanistan via the Torkham and Spin Boldak border has declined, deportation figures from **Pakistan** fluctuated from day to day. Police operations against Afghans persist following reports of evictions and arrests of both documented and undocumented individuals, including holders of PoR cards, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) and reception slips. In 2023, [27,799 Afghan nationals](#) have been arrested thus far, a figure exceeding any previous year since data collection on the arrest and detention of Afghan nationals began. Advocacy with authorities at all levels is ongoing.
- In **Afghanistan**, preparations are underway to relocate the Reception Center further away from the Spin Boldak border following repeated calls by the de facto authorities (DfA). UN agencies and other border consortium partners visited Takhtapul – the proposed location – to look at potential workspaces for their activities in view of the 9 December relocation deadline set by the DfA. Takhtapul is 55 km away from Spin Boldak and 75 km away from Kandahar. All present partners, including UNHCR, managed to identify areas and workspaces for their activities. UNHCR has opted for an open space next to the returnee processing building where refugee housing units will be installed to provide assistance.
- In **Afghanistan**, the Chargée d’Affaires a.i. of the European Union Delegation to Afghanistan, Ms. Rafaella Lodice, visited the Torkham border crossing and Reception Centre on 5 December to learn more about the humanitarian response. During her visit, the delegation met returnee families at the Zero Point and listened to the stories of their return. She also met with other humanitarian partners and visited the DfA-managed Registration Centre, as well as the UNHCR Encashment Centre in Jalalabad.
- In **Afghanistan**, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other Protection referrals. In 2023, over 61,000 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance, including some 44,000 PoR cardholders.
- In **Pakistan**, UNHCR hosted an inter-agency meeting on 5 December in Islamabad as part of its efforts to support a coordinated humanitarian response. UNHCR provided an update on the latest trends, including on the stabilization in return figures, and engagement with authorities on several issues related to the returns exercise.
- In **Pakistan**, UNHCR met with the Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), Ms. Julieta Valls Noyes, on 5 December in Islamabad. UNHCR briefed the Assistant Secretary on efforts to provide protection and humanitarian assistance in Pakistan, the ongoing response to Afghan returns and urgent need for durable solutions for people forced to flee. The meeting provided an important opportunity for UNHCR to extend its appreciation to PRM for their support and consistent advocacy. As part of her tour, Noyes also visited a UNHCR partner’s community centre in Rawalpindi.
- More funding** is urgently needed to bolster UNHCR’s and the inter-agency response to this new and unfolding emergency, with significant resource requirements identified in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Needs are continuing to rise due to a confluence of insecurity, instability, and environmental disasters, as well as economic and geopolitical crosswinds. To support the response, UNHCR’s ask under the inter-agency appeal is \$43.48 million for Afghanistan from November 2023 to July 2024 and \$8.43 million for Pakistan from November to December 2023.

