



UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #15

ARREST AND DETENTION FLOW MONITORING (15 September 2023 – 3 February 2024)

INTRODUCTION

In response to the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) decision of 26 September 2023 to enact an "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan", UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and IOM, the UN Migration Agency, have collated their data on the arrest, detention, and deportation of Proof of Registration (PoR) holders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and undocumented Afghan nationals as well as on the outflows of Afghan nationals at the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points, to better understand the protection environment and movements of Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan.

CHRONOLOGY

26 September 2023

"Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan" issued internally by MoI, outlining the "repatriation" of Afghan nationals in three phases, starting with undocumented Afghan nationals, followed by ACC holders, and PoR holders.

3 October 2023

Formal announcement by MoI of the deadline of 1 November 2023 for all "illegal foreigners" to leave Pakistan.

10 October 2023

[Government-wide circular](#) issued by the Chief Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CCAR) under the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), stating that PoR and ACC holders can only be repatriated on a voluntary basis.

17 & 27 October 2023

[Press release](#) issued by UN Special Rapporteurs and [statement](#) made by the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR), urging the Government of Pakistan to stop planned mass deportation of Afghan nationals in Pakistan.

30 October 2023

Notification issued by the MoI instructing all relevant authorities to enact the "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan" as of 1 November 2023.

3 November 2023

[Joint press release](#) issued by UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF calling for the protection of Afghans seeking safety in Pakistan.

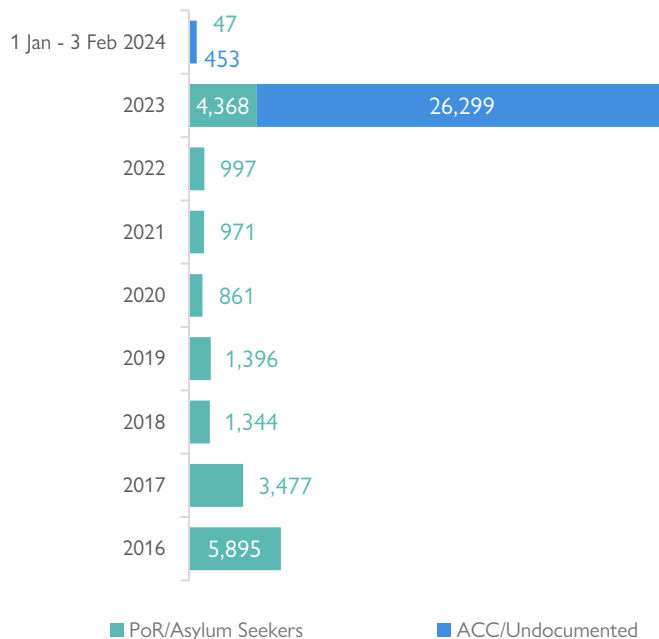
10 November 2023

Notification issued by SAFRON that the validity of PoR cards is extended to 31 December 2023.

6 December 2023

[Press release](#) issued by UN Special Rapporteurs calling for the protection of Afghan nationals in Pakistan.

ARREST AND DETENTION BY YEARS

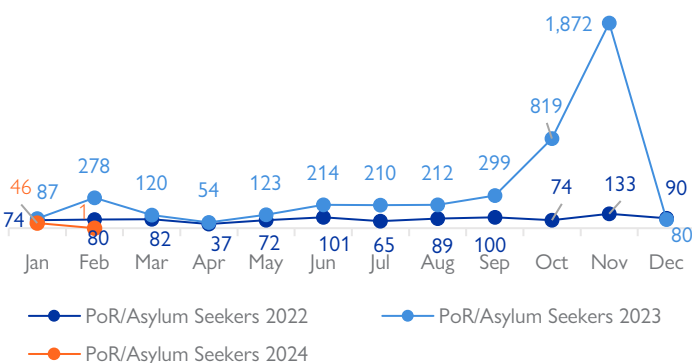


KEY FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

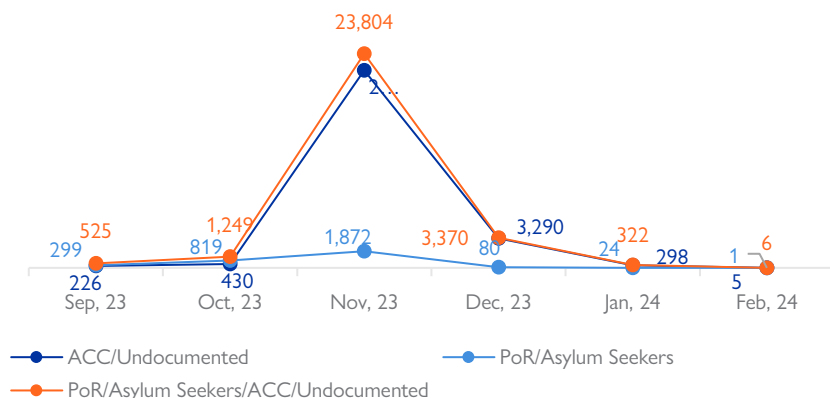
It is important to note that prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals. Since January 2023, IOM has started to collect this data, which should be considered indicative at this point. The figures, particularly of undocumented Afghan nationals, should be considered underreported.

- While UNHCR and IOM continue to document arrests and detentions, the rates have significantly decreased during the months of December 2023 and the start of 2024, in comparison to their peak in November 2023.
- The past two weeks (21 January – 3 February 2024) saw a 27 per cent decrease in the number of arrests and detentions, as compared to the previous two weeks.
- The number of PoR holders recorded as arrested in the month of January 2024 decreased by 47 per cent as compared to recorded arrests in January 2023.
- In the past two weeks, the reported rate of arrest for undocumented Afghan nationals has been highest in the province of Sindh. However, since the start of 1 October 2023, the overall rate of arrest remains highest for the province of Balochistan.

MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION TRENDS 2022 – 2024 (PoR HOLDERS)



MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION ANALYSIS 2023 – 2024



KEY FINDINGS



IOM enumerator collecting flow monitoring data at Torkham border. [IOM Pakistan 2024]

- During the past two weeks, UNHCR and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimate 7,600 Afghans returned through the Torkham, Ghulam Khan (located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Chaman, Badini and Bahramcha (located in Balochistan) border crossing points to Afghanistan.
- Cumulatively, from 15 September 2023 to 3 February 2024, 511,997 individuals have returned.
- The number of returnees and deportations have decreased significantly since the first week of November 2023, with numbers being comparable to the period before 15 September 2023.
- Most of the returnees were undocumented Afghans (91%), followed by PoR holders (7%) and ACC holders (2%).
- Four per cent of the return flow can be considered as vulnerable persons, including chronically ill people, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and others.
- Fear of arrest (89%) remains the most common reason to return to Afghanistan among returnees.
- Returnees were most likely to return from Quetta (21%) and Peshawar (17%) in Pakistan and intend to go to Nangarhar (26%), Kandahar (23%) and Kabul (15%) in Afghanistan.

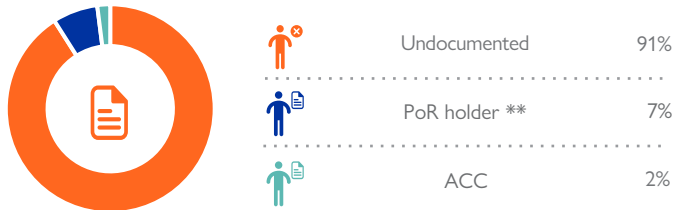
511,997 (100%)
TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNS

455,968 (89%)
TOTAL RETURNEEES

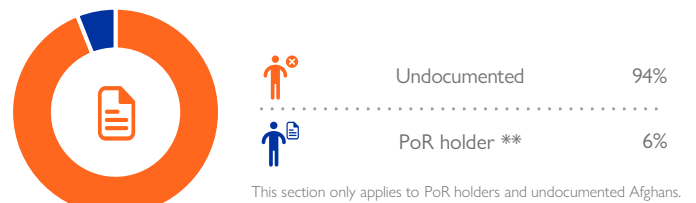
26,071 (5%)*
TOTAL FACILITATED PoR RETURNEEES

29,958 (6%)
TOTAL DEPORTATIONS

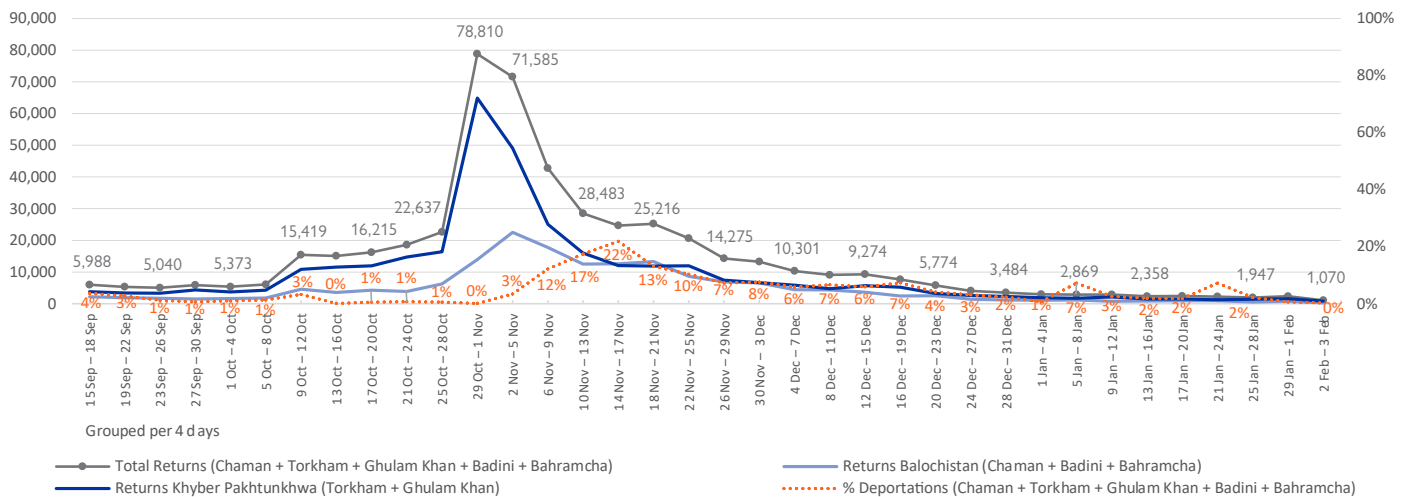
DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEEES



DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL DEPORTEES



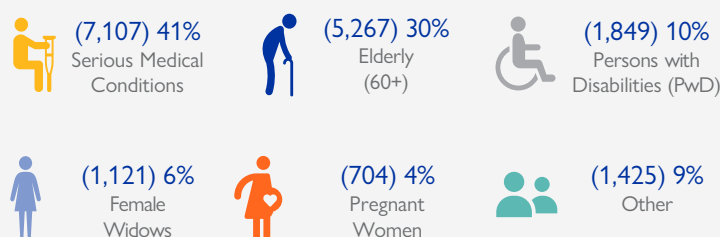
TOTAL RETURNS AND % DEPORTATIONS | 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 3 FEBRUARY 2024



This section only applies to ACC holders and undocumented Afghans

TYPE OF VULNERABILITY

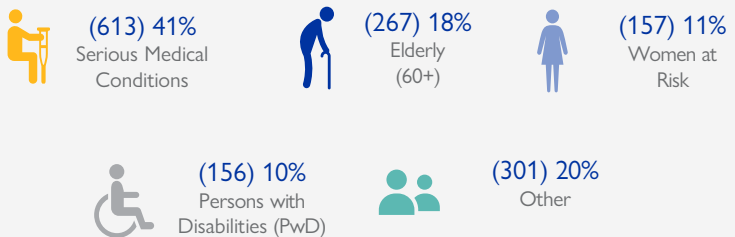
(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)



This section only applies to PoR holders

TYPE OF VULNERABILITY

(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)



*The number refers to facilitated PoR returns through VRCs who crossed the border during the reporting period. 26,215 received assistance from the encashment centers in Afghanistan during the reporting period.

** This figure refers to PoR holders based on interviews conducted with returnees in Afghanistan.



ARREST AND DETENTION | FLOW MONITORING (15 September 2023 – 3 February 2024)

This section only applies to ACC holders and undocumented Afghans

AGE AND GENDER (Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 20,718)

Female	Male
49.7% 191,225	50.3% 193,933
(10.5%) 40,366	38,765 (10.0%)
(18.7%) 72,145	77,634 (20.2%)
(19.0%) 73,114	71,578 (18.6%)
(1.5%) 5,600	5,956 (1.5%)

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN (TOP 5)

	Fear of arrest	89%
	Loss of livelihood	22%
	Communal pressure	14%
	Unable to pay utilities	7%
	Unable to pay house rent	6%

This section only applies to PoR holders

AGE AND GENDER (Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 1,810)

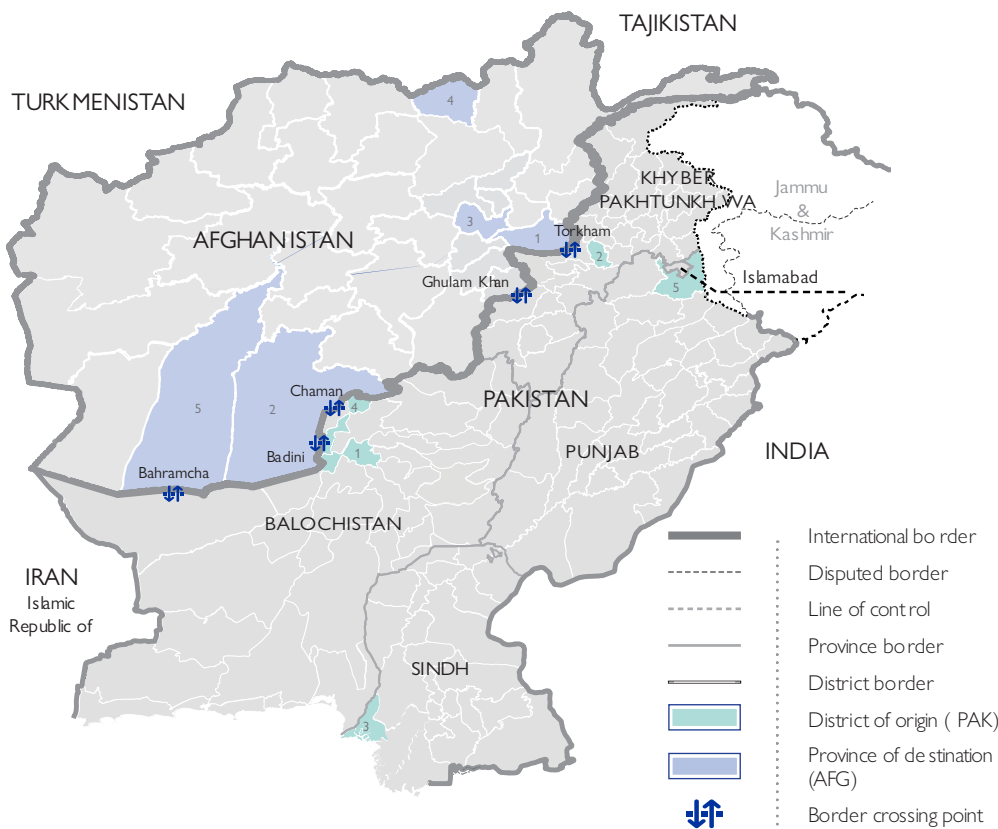
Female	Male
48.9% 12,764	51.1% 13,305
(9.3%) 2,430	2,299 (8.8%)
(19.5%) 5,084	5,288 (20.3%)
(19.1%) 4,981	5,275 (20.3%)
(1.0%) 269	443 (1.7%)

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN (TOP 5)

	Fear of arrest	52%
	Inflation	22%
	Loss of livelihood	13%
	Strict border entry requirement	3%
	Other	5%

DISTRICT OF ORIGIN IN PAKISTAN AND PROVINCE OF DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN

This map applies to undocumented Afghans, ACC and PoR holders.



DISTRICT OF ORIGIN (TOP 5)

1. Quetta	21%
2. Peshawar	17%
3. Karachi Central	16%
4. Killa Abdullah	7%
5. Rawalpindi	6%

PROVINCE OF DESTINATION (TOP 5)

1. Nangarhar	26%
2. Kandahar	23%
3. Kabul	15%
4. Kunduz	12%
5. Helmand	6%

Disclaimer:

Dotted line represents approximately the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. This document was produced jointly by IOM and UNHCR. The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM or UNHCR. The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.