

ASSISTED AFGHAN RETURNS



63,154

Assisted Afghan returns

Oct-Dec 2023

102 from Iran

63,042 Pakistan

10 other countries

75,949

Assisted Afghan returns

Jan-Dec 2023

497 from Iran

75,325 Pakistan

127 other countries

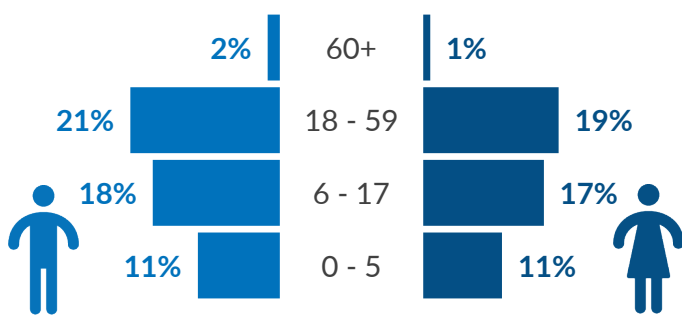
In 2023 UNHCR has assisted some 76,000 returns¹, (99% from Pakistan), with the fourth quarter alone representing 83% of this year's returns. The main drive for such an increase during the last quarter of the year, was October 3rd Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsement of a plan to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, largely Afghans, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November.

The 2023 overall return figure, is some twelve times higher than the one recorded in 2022 (6,506 individuals). The 2022 registered total refugee returns had been already five times higher than the 2021 overall returns.

Based on protection monitoring interviews, conducted upon arrival with returnees, most have stated that economic reasons for return movements still mean a lot in decision-making, however since early September 2023, the statements on **shrinking protection space**, particularly **fear of arrest and deportation, continuous harassment, arrest and bribing, night raids by police** influenced the decision to return.

Throughout 2023, 75% of the Afghans returns occurred predominantly in these five provinces: Nangarhar (25%), Kandahar (18%), Kabul (18%), Kunduz (8%) and Helmand (6%).

RETURNEE DEMOGRAPHICS 2023



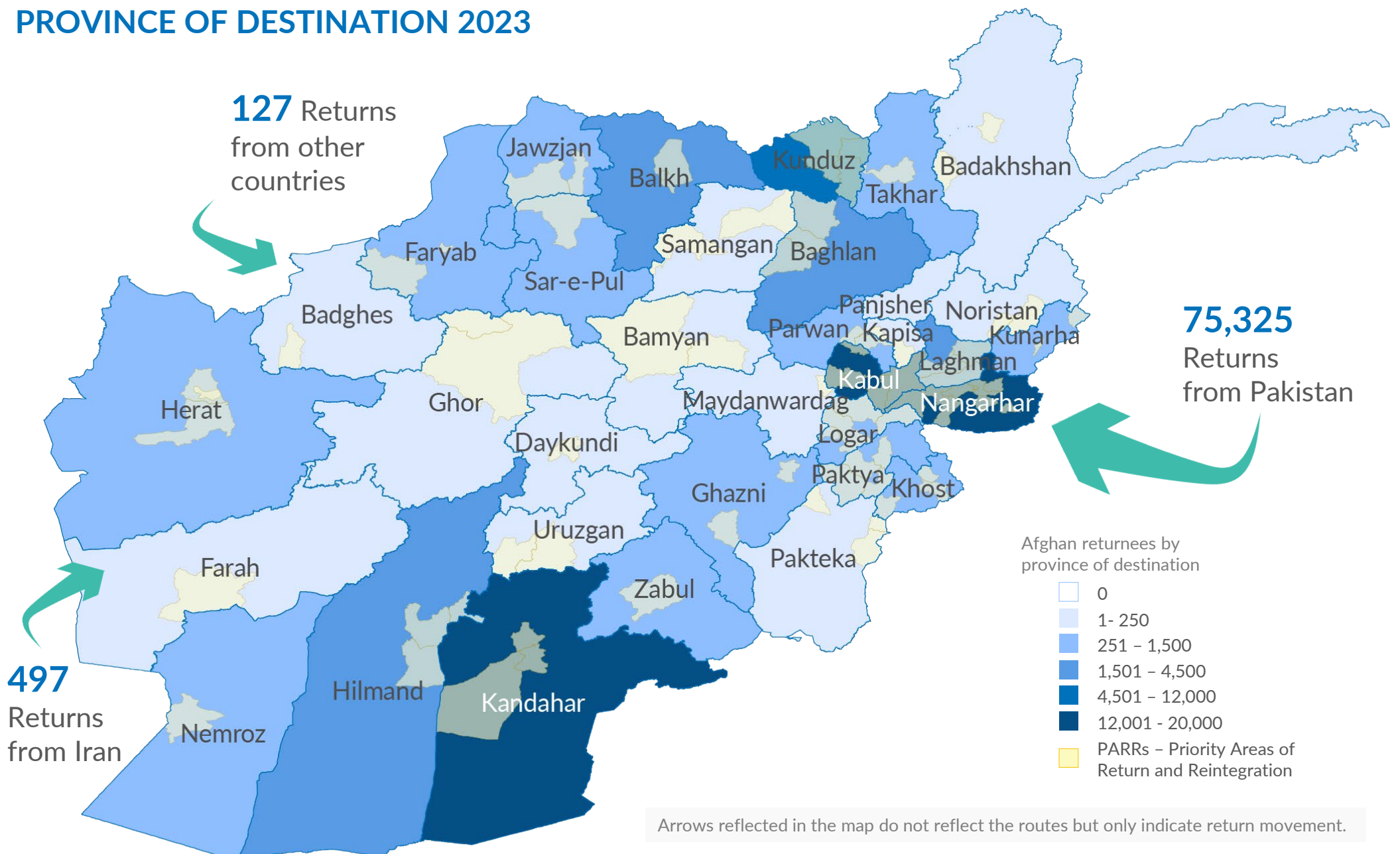
77% of the returnees are Women and Children

ASSISTANCE AT ENCASHMENT CENTRES (ECs) IN AFGHANISTAN

USD 16M was provided in cash assistance to returnees during 2023 Q4 . A total of **USD 21M** 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 and protection referrals.

PROVINCE OF DESTINATION 2023

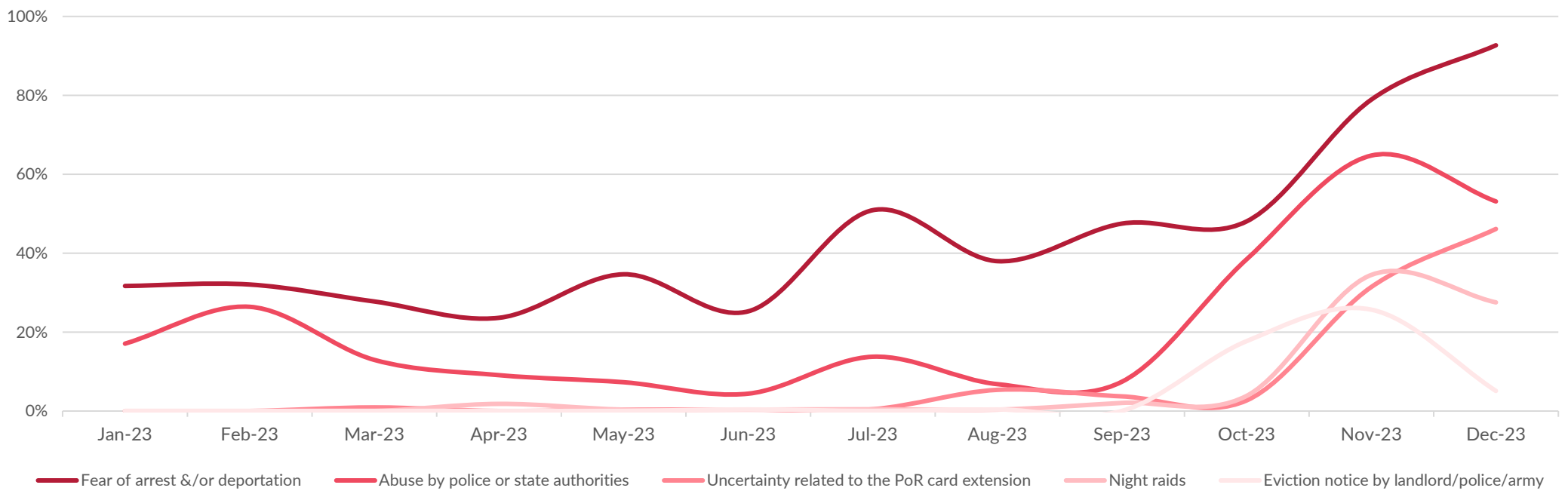


¹ Including Facilitated Volrep, Proof of Registration card holders, UNHCR slip holders, their nuclear family members with or without documentation, UNHCR asylum certificate holders and protection referrals.

REASONS RELATED TO RETURN

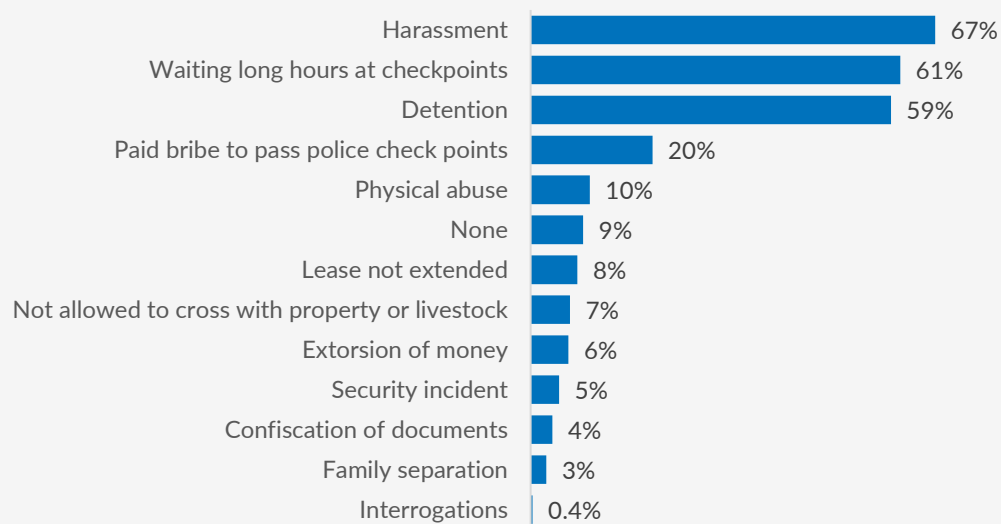
Source: UNHCR's returnee monitoring of voluntary returns conducted at ECs. Timeframe: findings from Jan. to Dec. 2023. Multiple answer questions may add up to over 100%.

Main shifts on reasons for leaving Pakistan since September 2023

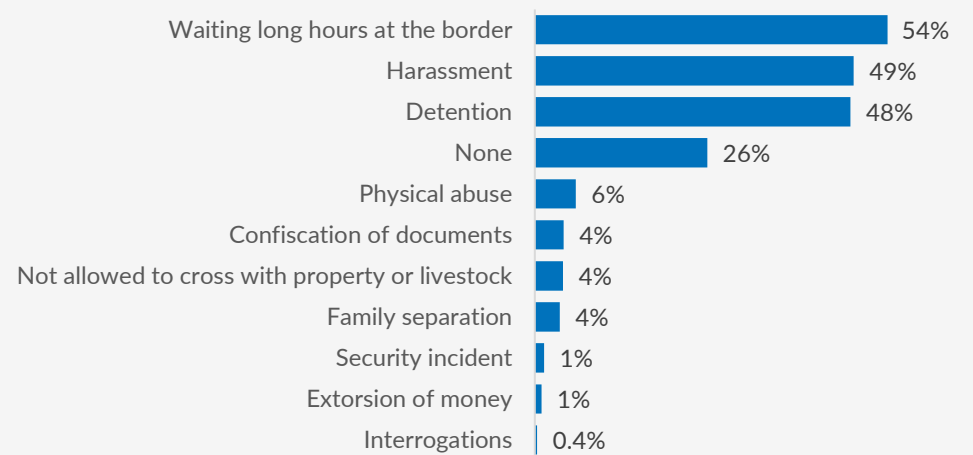


Throughout 2023, UNHCR has conducted voluntary returns monitoring at Encashment Centers in Afghanistan. The main reasons for leaving the country of asylum were (1) **high costs of living/high rent 90%**, (2) **no employment opportunities 82%**, and (3) **strict border requirements 60%**. However, if analyzed month by month (as per the chart above), it's possible to note a considerable increase after September 2023 for five specific reasons: **fear of arrest and/or deportation (93% in December)**, **abuse by police or state authorities (53% in December)**, **uncertainty related to the Proof of Refugee cards extension in Pakistan (46%)**, **night raids and eviction notice by landlord, police and/or army in Pakistan.**

Problems faced prior to the cross-border movement



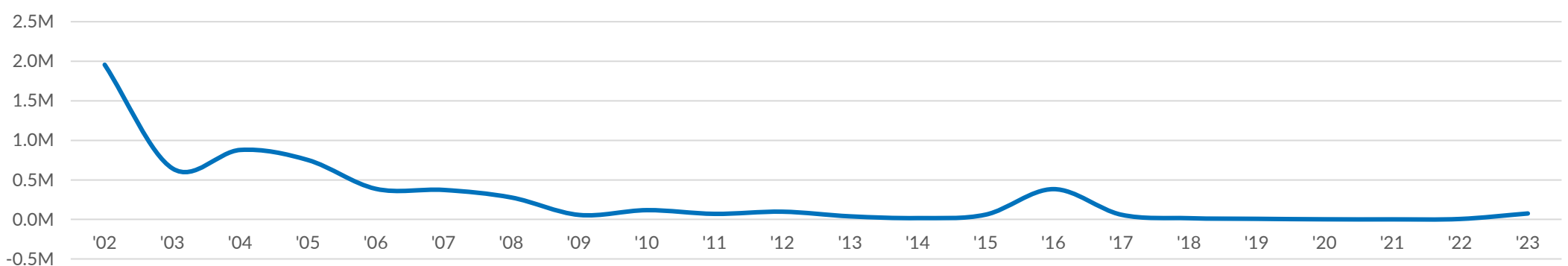
Problems experienced at the border point



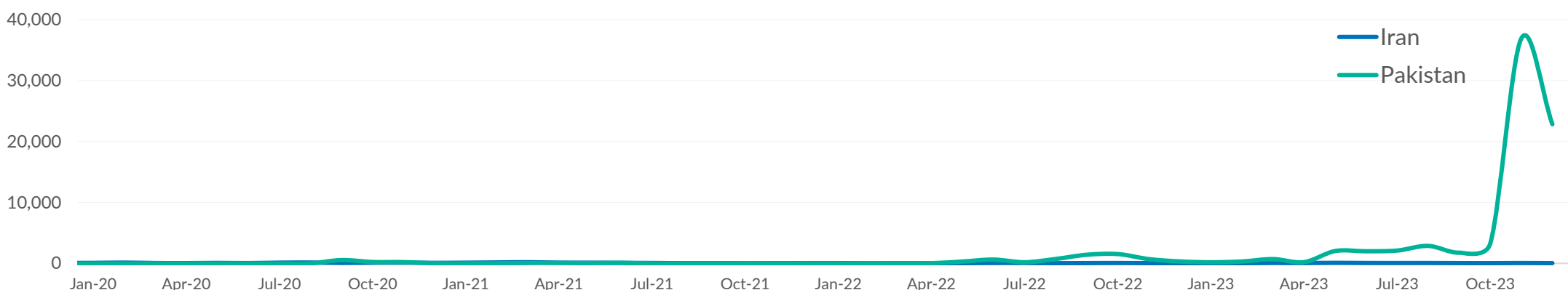
Source: UNHCR's monitoring tool for Forcibly Afghan Returns from Pakistan. Timeframe: findings from Nov. to Dec. 2023. Multiple answer questions may add up to over 100%.

As a result of the October 3rd Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsed a plan to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November, UNHCR put in place a system to monitor and analyze these returns. The above charts reflect the problems reported by the returnees prior to the cross-border movement, and also at the border point.

AFGHAN RETURNS 2002-2023



AFGHAN RETURNS BY MAIN COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM (zoomed in 2020-2023)



For further information please visit the [Afghanistan Situation Operational Portal](https://www.unhcr.org/afghanistan-situation) or please contact RBAPDIMA@unhcr.org and AFGKAIMU@unhcr.org.