

AFGHANISTAN MONTHLY PROTECTION MONITORING SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2024





7,340 assessments conducted in September

50,222 persons reached



6% decrease of total assessments compared to August



Conducted across **95 districts** in **32 provinces**



32% of interviewed households are headed by women. Out of the overall household members, **51 %** are female, of which **29 %** are girls, and **58 %** are children



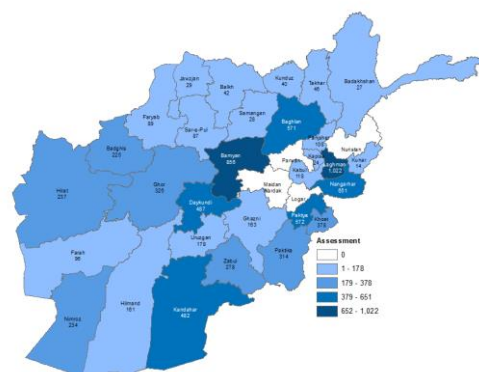
8% heads of households with **disabilities**

Introduction

The analysis provided in this report relies on data gathered through UNHCR's protection monitoring tools. UNHCR's **Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM)** interventions include household-level assessments, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), aiming to collect evidence-based information on the protection needs and risks of displaced, returnee and host communities. CBPM outcomes inform UNHCR programming and strategic decision-making and advocacy and also feed into the [Afghanistan Protection Cluster's analysis](#) and information products. UNHCR has also developed a public version of its CBPM dashboard, which will enhance transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders and can be accessed at [Community Based Protection Monitoring Dashboards](#). **Rapid multi-sectoral household assessments (RHAF)** aim to identify persons in need of assistance through UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes and also provide valuable insights into the vulnerabilities of households as well as related protection needs and risks. The selection of areas is based on the high density of displaced and returnees among communities, including priority areas of return and reintegration and newly accessible areas. UNHCR's population groups include refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees, refugees and asylum seekers and members of the host communities.

KEY POINTS

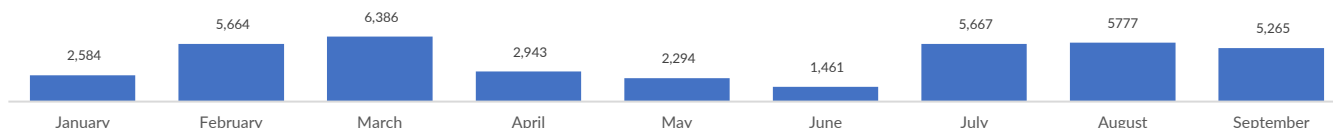
- **Women and girls** continue to face significant challenges in accessing basic services and assistance, reflecting their systemic discrimination and movement restrictions.
- **Among the surveyed population in September, 64% of head of households** reported experiencing one or more forms of vulnerabilities, reflecting a 4% increase compared to August.
- **Food assistance** was the most crucial need highlighted by surveyed households, followed by purchasing productive assets for small businesses.
- **Many families reported having resorted to harmful coping mechanisms**, such as borrowing money, selling assets, or harmful practices that imply serious child protection risks.



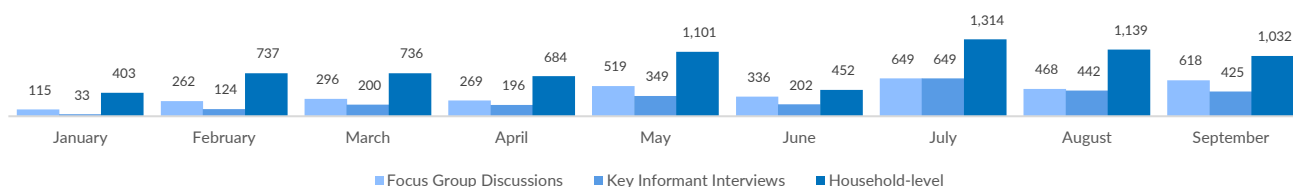
OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTED

UNHCR conducted 7,340 assessments in September 2024, using various tools such as household assessments, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to assess communities' protection needs and risks.

RHAF Assessments (household-level)



CBPM Assessment



- **Most interviewed households were IDP returnees**, followed by refugee returnees, reflecting UNHCR's focus on the specific protection issues that Afghans face upon their return.
- Across all assessment modalities, **UNHCR reached 50,222 individuals** in September, primarily women and children. b women headed household account for 32% of the interviews, indicating a 2 % increase compared with August.
- UNHCR is working closely with all its partners to **ensure the participation of female staff in all activities** and is using various modalities to **capture the voices of women and girls despite the severe restrictions**.

IDENTIFIED VULNERABILITIES



64% with vulnerabilities



56% experienced stress affecting their day-to-day life



8% heads of households with disabilities

- **According to the RHAF survey conducted in September, 64% of heads of households have some form of vulnerability**, women at risk, children at risk, female-headed households, the elderly persons at risk, persons with life-threatening health issues, child-headed households, and persons with disabilities. These findings are supported by the CBPM household assessments, which also point to 6% of the households surveyed being headed by widows (showing a decrease of 2% from the previous month) and 11% by older persons or children (increased by 3% from the previous month).
- **According to the CBPM survey conducted in September, 56% of respondents indicated that they or their family members had experienced feelings of stress that affected their day-to-day life**, pointing to a high prevalence of MHPSS issues among the surveyed population. This shows an increase of 2% from the previous month. The main stressors identified were lack of employment and severe economic hardship, food insecurity and unavailability or lack of access to services, alongside physical health

problems, child labor, school dropout, armed conflict, denied access to education, denied access to education, community tension, family violence, forced marriage and physical and emotional abuse in the family. As a result of experiencing stress, 38% of the respondents indicated that they had observed **behavioral changes** in the household (shows a decrease of 1% from the previous month), which included family members appearing sad and stressed, loss of appetite, eating disorder, aggressiveness, self-isolation, and thoughts of self-harm and suicidal tendencies.

- Vulnerabilities were also high among household members, pointing to the **multi-faceted protection risks that Afghan families face**. The main vulnerabilities observed under the RHAF include children at women at risk 29%, children at risk 27%, female headed household 17%, elderly person at risk 17%, persons with life-threatening health issues 10%, child headed household 9%, and persons with disabilities 9%. In addition, CBPM data also points to high rates of school dropouts (38%) among surveyed families due to a lack of financial support by families and the engagement of children in child labor. Life-threatening health issues 21%, age (8%), and legal protection and security needs (8%), are among other risks and vulnerabilities pointed out by the CBPM respondents. **CBPM monitors have also observed tension or violence in 20% of the households** affecting predominantly children (63%), women (27%), older persons (7%) as well as persons with disabilities (4%).

SAFETY & FREEDOM



49% mentioned community areas **off-limits for women and girls**

- **49 % of the heads of households indicated that there are places in the community that women and girls cannot access**, highlighting the significant challenges in freedom of movement and participation in public life.
- The **main places that women and girls cannot go to** include education facilities, markets, clinic, water points, and latrines.
- The **main reasons for movement limitations** include discrimination, harassment, and intimidation in public areas, lack of identity and civil documents, mahram requirements, and safety concerns related to debts and social and cultural barriers.

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION



62% reported lack of **civil documentation**



42% reported barriers **accessing legal services**

- **Lack of civil documentation** continues to be a key concern raised by household members surveyed. **Women and children are by far the most affected population groups. Undocumented returnees and IDPs display significantly higher rates (66% and 63%, respectively)**, while the percentage of refugee returnees and IDP returnees is lower (56% and 62%, respectively). Considering the civil documentation needs reported for Afghan returnees from Pakistan, this trend will be closely observed over the following months.
- The **primary documents missing** are e-Tazkera, followed by passport, marriage certificates, birth certificate, paper Tazkera and other certificates. The main reason is that these documents were never obtained; the households interviewed lack knowledge about the procedures, the importance of these

documents, unaffordable fees, re-issuance problems, destruction of the documents, and concerns over personal safety.

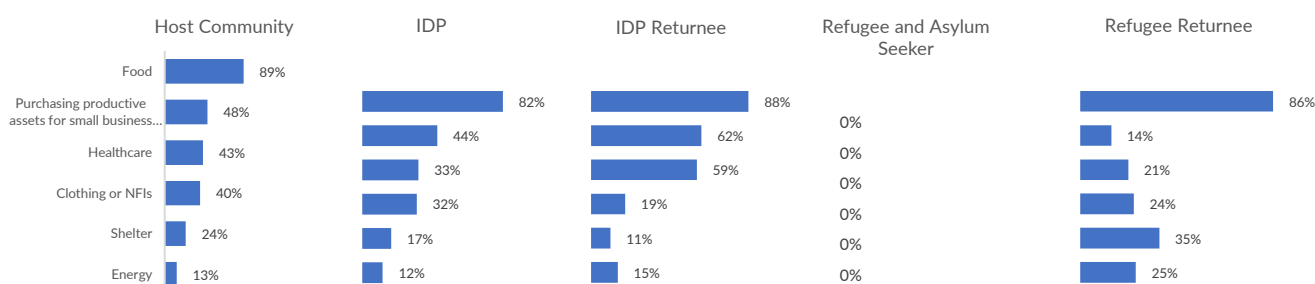
- The **CBPM survey conducted in September** indicates that legal assistance projects were more effectively implemented and reached more people compared to the last two months. Compared to August, the trend in CBPM assessments shows a 19% decrease in barriers faced by respondents in accessing legal assistance, including civil documentation and HLP. High cost, unavailability of services, disallowance by family members, lack of information on services, and transportation limitations affected women and girls the most.
- The **impact of not having documentation is drastic**, with two-thirds of the respondents indicating that it prevents them from accessing basic services. It is also a barrier to accessing education and governmental or humanitarian assistance and contributes to movement restrictions and property ownership disputes.

NEEDS PRIORITIZATION, ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

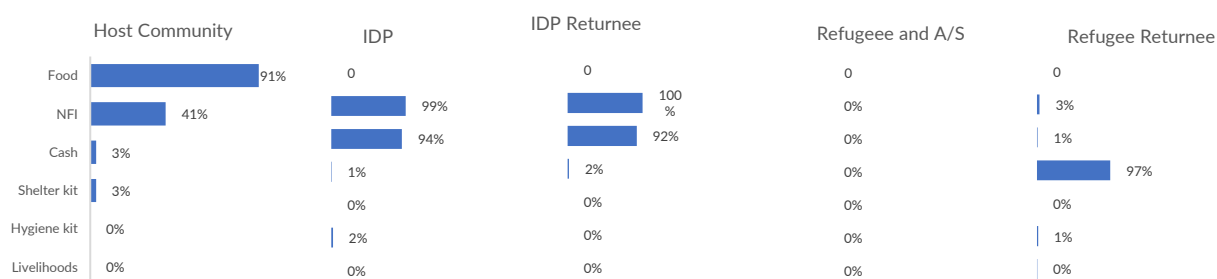


87% mentioned food as the most pressing need

Top Needs



Assistance Provided



- Food assistance was the most crucial need prioritized by households surveyed under the RHAF, followed by purchasing productive assets to run a small business, health cost, shelter, clothing/NFI, need for rent, shelter, energy, and fuel. According to the RHAF survey conducted in September, despite the assistance provided, 70% of the surveyed households are still in need of humanitarian assistance.

- This is confirmed by the CBPM findings, which show 88% of all households reported being in need of food assistance in the past three months, mainly due to not being assessed for assistance, lack of knowledge about eligibility criteria and procedures, and due to the discrimination or exclusion by the community leaders and the household do not need food assistance. The percentage is even higher among female respondents (94%) than male respondents (85%), pointing to the heightened economic vulnerability of women. **Respondents also face challenges accessing MHPSS services and drinking water**, with 56% and 53% of households needing access to these essential services. However, irrespective of the gender of the head of household, **all respondents highlighted that among those facing access challenges, women and girls are by far the most affected groups**. Refugee returnees and IDP returnees are particularly affected by overcrowded shelters. Other shelter-related concerns include damaged shelter, lack of privacy and protective walls and doors, exposure to the natural environment (weather), and exposure to security (due to location).
- **Overall, women and girls continue to face significant challenges in accessing the most basic services**, reflecting systemic discrimination and movement restrictions.
- Other main barriers to accessing services include unavailability of services, high costs (including for transportation), lack of information on services as well as lack of documents.

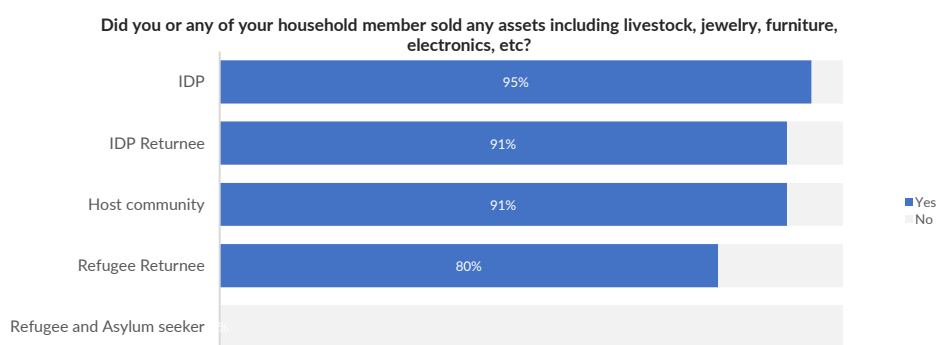
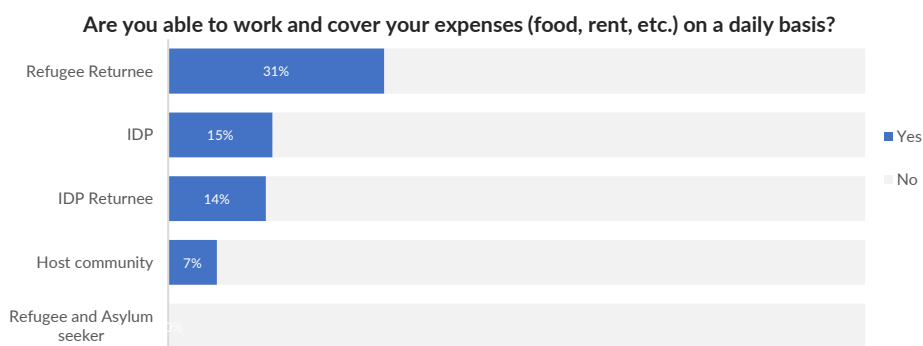
LIVELIHOODS AND COPING STRATEGIES



86% reported selling assets to meet vital needs



82% struggled to cover **daily living expenses** (food, rent, and other basic needs)



- Due to financial constraints and high poverty, many families have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms with severe implications that significantly impact women and children. CBPM and RHAF data indicate that most households borrow money to cope with **financial problems**. The prevalence

was even higher for refugee and IDP returnees surveyed. The first coping strategy for refugees is sending their children to work. **Other coping mechanisms** identified were selling assets (86% of RHAF respondents and 50% of CBPM respondents have resorted to this measure), borrowing money, child labor, skipping meals or reducing meal sizes, engaging in hazardous work, or relocating family members abroad.

- According to the CBPM findings, a significant number of the surveyed respondents indicated that their **families had adopted harmful practices due to acute poverty and financial reasons**. These included skipping meals, engaging children in labor, including sending them to neighboring countries to work, migrating abroad, and arranging early marriages for their children to alleviate the financial burden. The findings highlight the urgent need to support vulnerable families through integrated programming interventions, including child protection, livelihoods, and community engagement.

HOUSEHOLDS EMPLOYMENT STATUS & SOURCE OF INCOME



81% engaged in informal income-generating activities

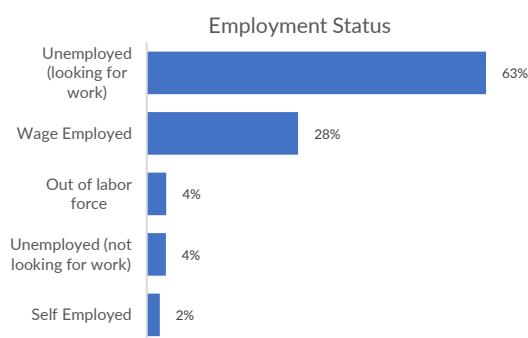


63% relied on financial support from relatives



63% are unemployed

- According to the RHAF survey conducted in **September**, over 62.5% of households are unemployed, 95% have accrued debts, and 28% rely on daily labor, with whatever income generated usually spent on essential needs and debt repayment. A total of 82% of the surveyed households were not able to afford daily living expenses such as providing food, rent, and other basic critical needs.
- The lack of economic opportunities, entrenched poverty, repeated and protracted displacement, and the shrinking protection space have eroded people's resilience and point to the critical need for livelihood and economic empowerment interventions.



LEADING CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT AND INTENTIONS FOR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION



55% of all IDPs refer to **security concerns (including armed conflict)** as top reason for their displacement, including those displaced within the last three months.

- According to the CBPM survey conducted in **September**, the main reasons for the displacement of IDPs in the last three months were security concerns, natural disasters, and displacement caused by economic reasons.
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in **September**, 15% of the IDPs displaced in the last three months expressed to return to their original places due to safety and family considerations, while 52

% indicated that they would remain in the current location and 32 % are uncertain about whether to return, integrate, or relocate, mainly due to overall security situation, economic hardship, lack of services or infrastructure, children's education, natural disasters, and family.

- **According to the CBPM survey conducted in September**, 35% of FGD participants noted that their communities have received new arrivals. These include returnees deported from Pakistan and Iran, as well as families displaced by floods, drought, and security issues.

