

#### ASSISTED AFGHAN RETURNS



**6,382**

Assisted Afghan returns

**Oct-Dec 2024**

**388** from Iran

**6,382** Pakistan

**23** other countries

**54,720**

Assisted Afghan returns

**Jan-Dec 2024**

**1,020** from Iran

**53,587** Pakistan

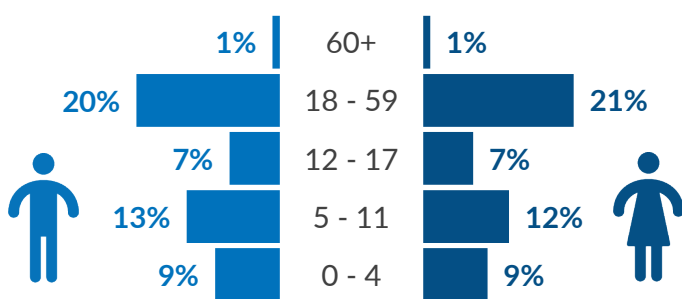
**113** other countries

In 2024, January was the month with the highest number of assisted returns (12,603), representing close to one-quarter of the overall 2024 returns, which followed an even higher level of returns during the last quarter of 2023, the main drive for such a high number of returns was the October 3<sup>rd</sup> Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsement of the *Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP)* to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, largely Afghans, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November. It is also worth noting that in the last four months of 2024 the number of assisted returns from Iran have increased considerably, registering 55% of the 2024 overall returns from Iran. This happened in a context where the yearly number of Afghans returned by the Iranian authorities to Afghanistan reached its highest since 2021.

Based on protection monitoring interviews, conducted upon arrival with returnees at Encashment Centres (ECs), reasons for returning from Pakistan such as **fear of arrest/deportation, disrespectful treatment by police/state authorities, and uncertainty related to the Proof of Registration (PoR) card extension in Pakistan**, decreased from April to December 2024 when compared to September 2023 to March 2024. Regarding those returning from Iran, in the past two years the two main reasons for return were **high cost of living and lack of employment opportunities**.

In 2024, **70% of the intended provinces of return focused predominantly on five provinces: Nangarhar (25%), Kabul (21%), Kandahar (9%), Kunduz (9%), and Laghman (6%)**. Of the overall returns, **79% are women and children**, and some **2.3% of the individuals served have disabilities**. In 2024, **UNHCR assisted 54,720 Afghan returns<sup>1</sup>**, (98.9% from Pakistan).

#### RETURNEE DEMOGRAPHICS 2024



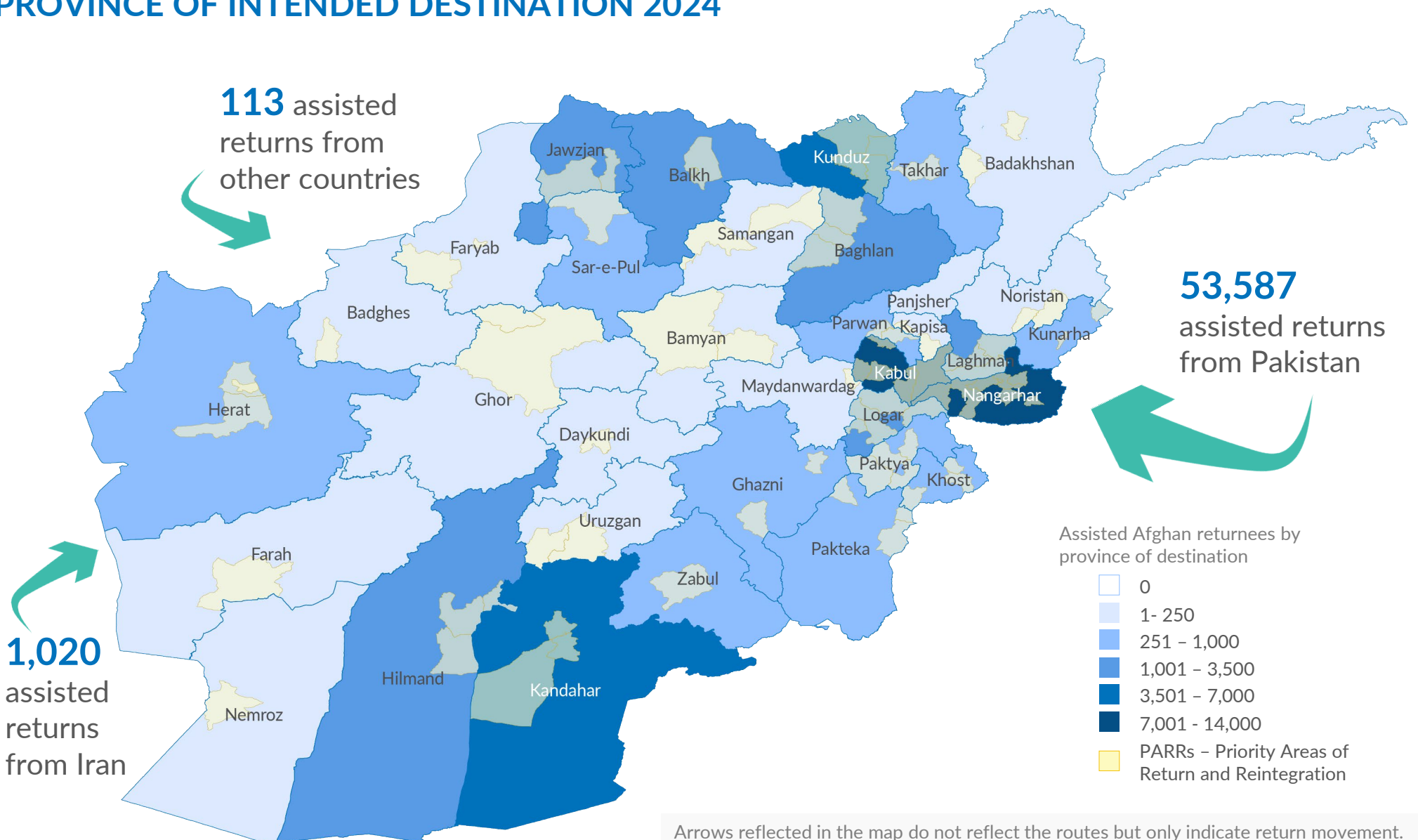
79% of the returnees are women and children

#### ASSISTANCE AT ENCASHMENT CENTRES (ECs) IN AFGHANISTAN

**USD 1.8M** was provided in cash assistance to returnees during 2024 Q4. A total of **USD 13.3M** was provided in 2024.

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 INTENDED DESTINATION 2024

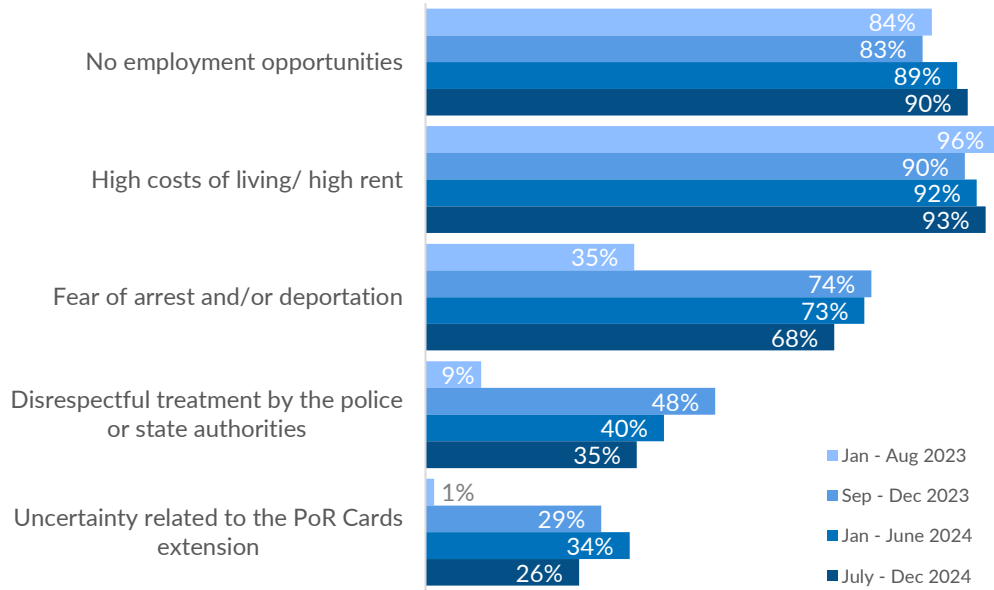


<sup>1</sup> Including assistance provided in Encashment Centres in Afghanistan to Amayesh card holders, PoR card holders, UNHCR slip holders, their nuclear family members with or without documentation, UNHCR asylum certificate holders and protection referrals and Facilitated Volrep.

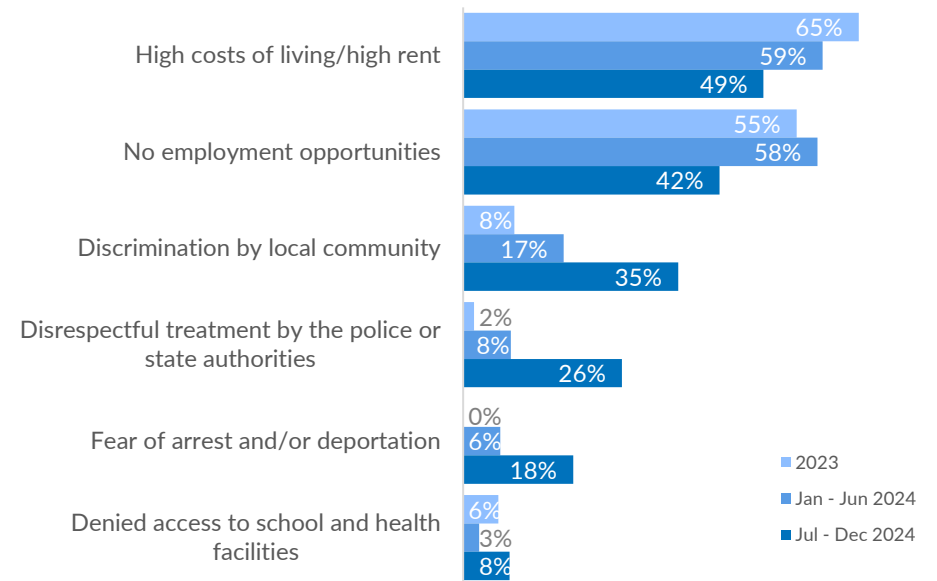
### REASONS RELATED TO RETURN

Source: UNHCR's returnee monitoring of voluntary returns conducted at ECs. Timeframe: findings from Jan. 2023 to Dec. 2024. Multiple answer questions may add up to over 100%.

#### Main reasons for return from Pakistan



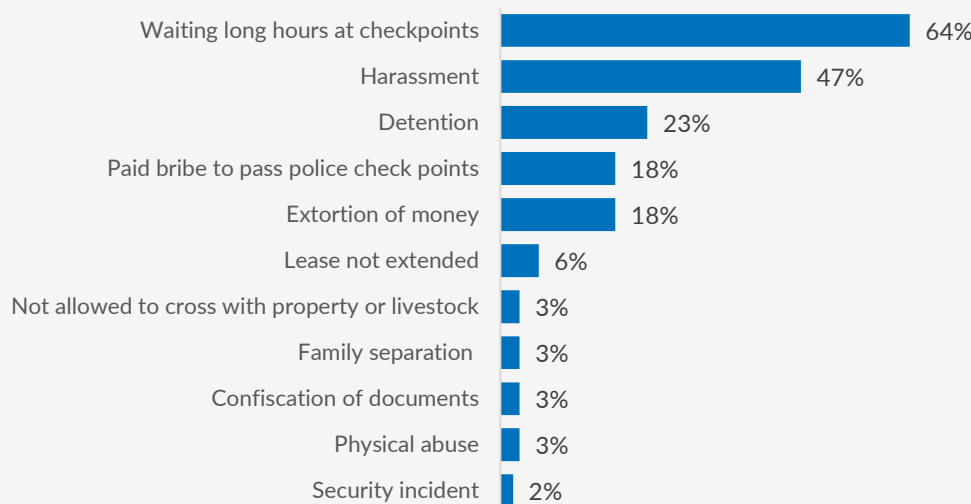
#### Main reasons for return from Iran



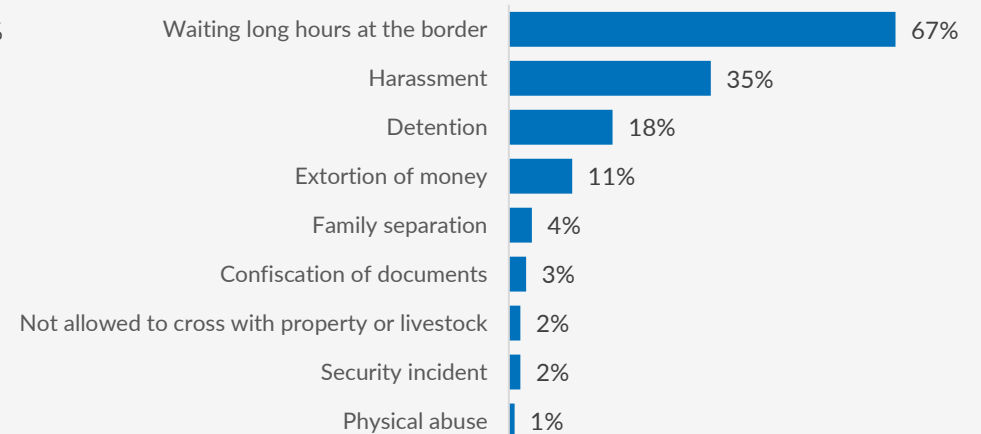
UNHCR maintained enhanced protection monitoring through dedicated protection desks managed by UNHCR protection staff (male and female) who conduct return monitoring at the ECs in Afghanistan. The 2024 overall main reasons for leaving the country of asylum were (1) **high costs of living/high rent 88%**, (2) **no employment opportunities 85%**, and (3) **fear of arrest and/or deportation 63%**. The first two reasons align with the general economic context in both countries but also highlight the compounded difficulties Afghans face in supporting themselves under the current circumstances.

Looking specifically at those returning from Pakistan, there was a considerable increase during the IFRP peak (September – December 2023) in three specific reasons: **fear of arrest/deportation**, **abuse by police/state authorities**, and **uncertainty related to the Proof of Registration (PoR) card extension in Pakistan** (granted in July 2024). However, a decrease has been noted since then, which coincides with a decrease in the number of individuals returned by the Pakistani authorities. Regarding those returning from Iran, the second half of 2024 shows a considerable increase in three reasons for return: **disrespectful treatment by state authorities or police**, **discrimination by local community**, and **fear of arrest/deportation**, in line with the increased number of individuals returned by the Iranian authorities to Afghanistan. Returning refugees interviewed since June at the ECs continue to report a negative change in the behavior of the Iranian police and host community vis-à-vis all Afghans, including refugees.

#### Problems faced prior to the cross-border movement



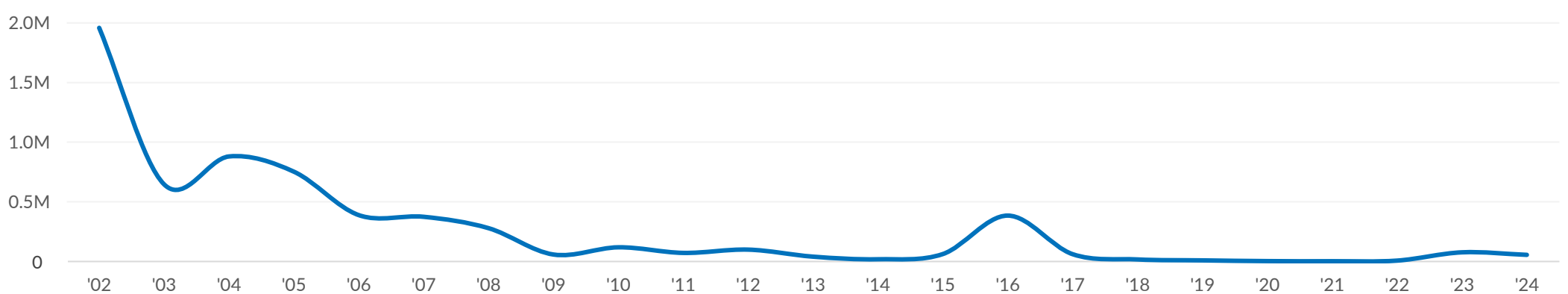
#### Problems experienced at the border point



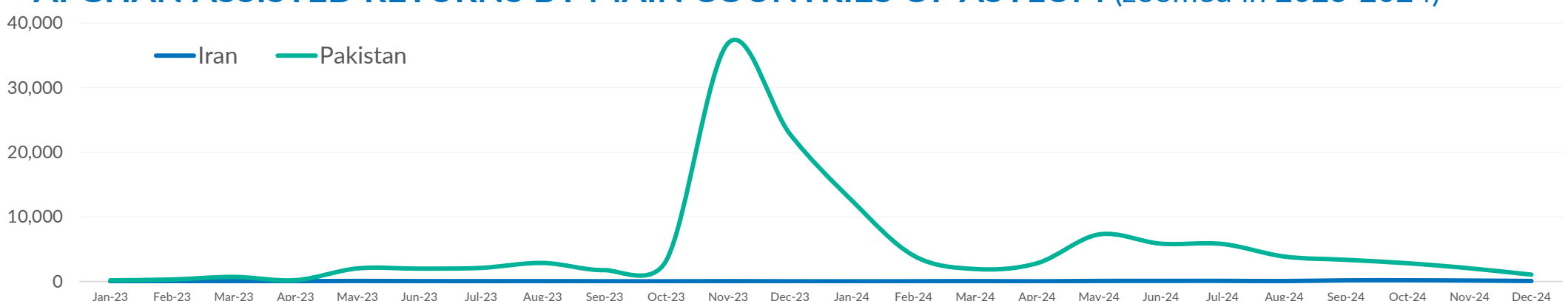
Source: UNHCR's monitoring tool for Forcibly Afghan Returns from Pakistan. Timeframe: findings from January-December 2024. Multiple answer questions may add up to over 100%.

As a result of the 2023 October 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 ASSISTED RETURNS 2002-2024



### AFGHAN ASSISTED RETURNS BY MAIN COUNTRIES OF ASYLUM (zoomed in 2023-2024)



For further information please visit the [Afghanistan Situation Operational Portal](#) or please contact [RBAPDIMA@unhcr.org](mailto:RBAPDIMA@unhcr.org) and [AFGKAIMU@unhcr.org](mailto:AFGKAIMU@unhcr.org).