

## UNHCR Pakistan Monthly Protection Trends Reporting Concerning Afghan Refugees | October 2017

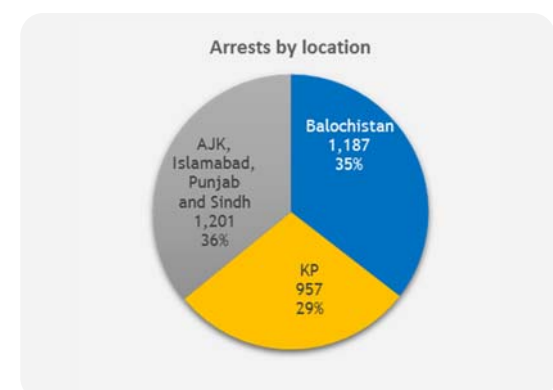
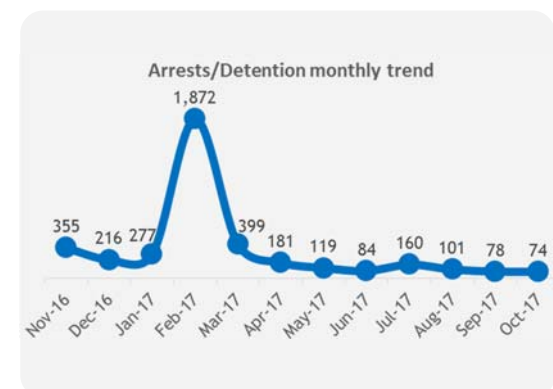
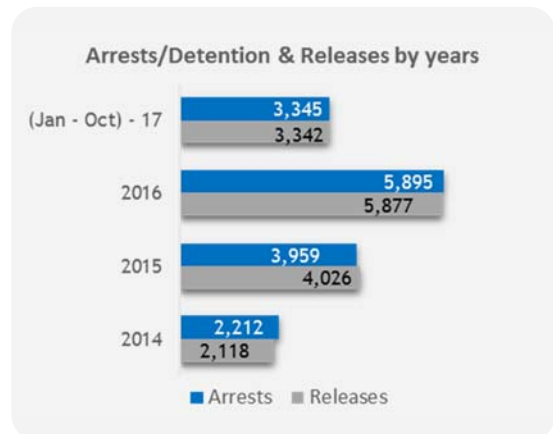
Repatriation had increased dramatically in 2016 for several reasons, including positive pull and negative push factors. In order to more systematically monitor these factors and provide an analysis of the situation, UNHCR Pakistan compiles a monthly note to inform key stakeholders of emerging trends and to raise formally and consistently any protection concerns that may arise.

### Trends

The voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees continued with 4,265 individuals (1,001 families) returning in October compared to 3,980 Afghan refugees (903 families) who repatriated in September. Since the start of voluntary repatriation in April 2017, 56,512 refugees (13,460 families) have repatriated to Afghanistan. According to IOM, 92,772 undocumented Afghans have returned to Afghanistan in 2017.

UNCHR conducted a targeted participatory assessment this year to gauge the effect, if any of the shift in focus to increased urban outreach and community-based protection. We also used the opportunity to enquire on repatriation and were pleased that results corroborated the information received from exit interviews and encashment centre reports, namely: the main factors influencing return this year have been: poverty and lack of employment opportunities in Pakistan, uncertainty of PoR card extension, strict border crossing control between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the desire to join relatives and/or communities back in Afghanistan and, to a lesser degree, police harassment. Community members overwhelmingly reported that security in Pakistan has improved in 2017 with 56 per cent of respondents stating that no major security incident had affected them during the year.

The Registration exercise for undocumented Afghans living in Pakistan is ongoing in 21 registration centres across the country. According to NADRA, 372,094 Afghans have been processed for Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC) since the start of the exercise on 16 August. NADRA, and the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees are leading the exercise with support from Afghanistan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and IOM. UNHCR is a participant in the Federal Task Force as well as supporting the mass information campaign and ensuring that Afghans who have international protection needs are referred to UNHCR.

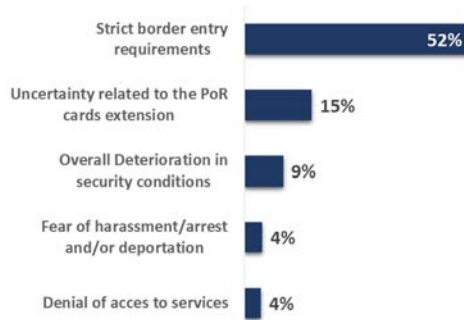


## Summary of Events

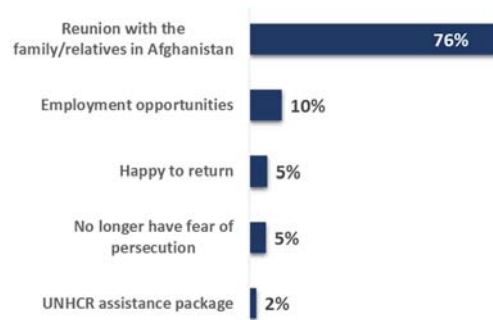
### 1. Reports from Exit Interviews/Encashment Centre Reporting

During interviews conducted at Baleli and Azakhel VRCs, returnees cited “strict border entry requirements” as the major factor influencing their return (52 percent). The percentage of returnees expressing fear of uncertainty regarding the PoR cards extension was the second factor influencing return decisions from Pakistan. This likely reflects the fact that PoR cards are set to expire in December 2017 and no extension has yet been granted. UNHCR continues to advocate for an extension with the government.

#### Push Factors



#### Pull Factors



### 2. Arrests & Detention

In October, 74 Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders were arrested, compared to 78 in September. All of them were released after the intervention of Advice and Legal Aid Centre lawyers. There has been a steady decline in the cases of arrests and detention since February 2017 when 1,872 PoR card holders were arrested.

### 3. Evictions/ Eviction Notices

The authorities have asked refugees to vacate two refugee villages in Mansehra district which are close to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor route. The authorities have given the refugees the options of voluntary repatriation or relocation to another refugee village. UNHCR is currently in discussions with the authorities and refugees to find with a solution.

In a new development, foreigners (including PoR card holders) are required to register themselves with the local police stations for rental agreements in Abbottabad. The police in Lora, Abbottabad, however, refused to register PoR card holders for unknown reasons. Advice and Legal Aid Centre teams are in contact with the affected refugees in order to resolve this matter.