



Summary of Legal Assistance and Aid Programme

January - December 2017

Legal Assistance	Arrests & detentions	Interventions	Releases
46,856	3,477 *	2,286 **	3,475 ***

Key findings

Nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) are operational in the main refugee-hosting areas of four provinces in order to provide free legal support to persons of concern: four in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), one in Sindh and three in Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) through partnership agreements with SHARP and one in Baluchistan run by SEHER.¹

Arrests and detentions of persons of concern increased (69%) in the month of December (83 in December compared to 49 in November 2017). The majority of the arrests were observed in the province of KP (63%), the largest province hosting refugees, followed by Punjab/Sindh (37%).

ALAC teams and the Ministry of SAFRON continue to take proactive steps to mitigate the risk of detention, including enhanced advocacy, pre-emptively intervening at police stations to prevent arrests and enhancing the response capacity of partners. UNHCR has developed and disseminated additional awareness raising material on legal assistance programs available for refugees (ALAC posters, brochures & use of social media).

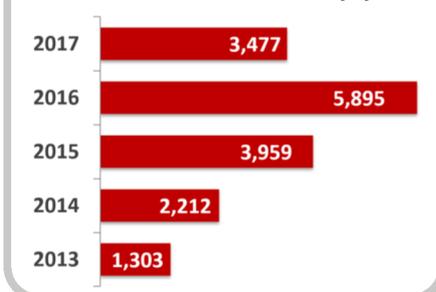
In December 2017, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of **2,451** persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners **intervened at police stations** for **83** arrested/detained persons of concern and secured the release of all detained individuals. In the majority of cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested refugees before the official lodging of charges against them which resulted in their release from detention within 24 hours. Additionally, ALAC partners provided court representations to 27 persons of concern.

Overall, a decrease in arrest and detention was observed from March to December 2017 with an average of around 132 persons detained per month and subsequently released through interventions of ALAC lawyers.

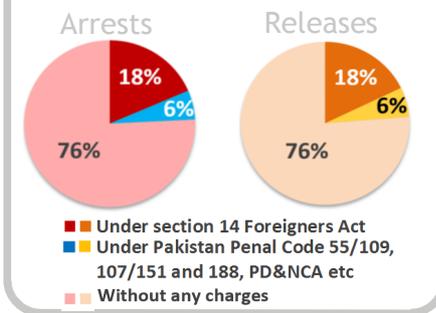
¹UNHCR funds 9 ALACs, through implementing partners. SHARP operates in KP, Punjab and Sindh. SEHER has implemented UNHCR funded ALAC legal aid services in Balochistan. The ILAC centre in Baluchistan previously run and funded by CRS has been taken over by SEHER by the end of September, 2017.

* Actual numbers of arrests / detentions / ** Interventions made by ALAC at police stations to secure the release of PoCs / *** Additionally 50 PoR cardholders were released through court interventions by CRS-ILAC in Balochistan from January to September 2017.

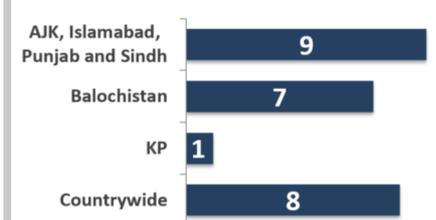
Arrests and detentions by year



Types of arrests and releases

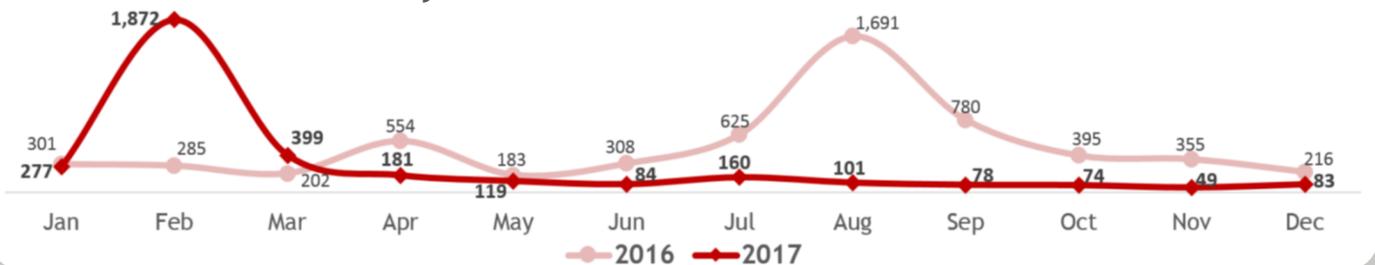


Avg length of detention (days)*



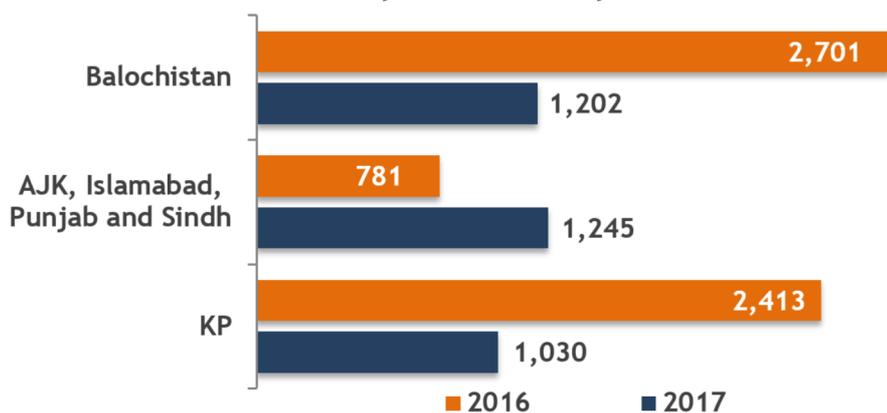
*Weighted proportionally by # of arrests in each province

Arrests and detentions by month

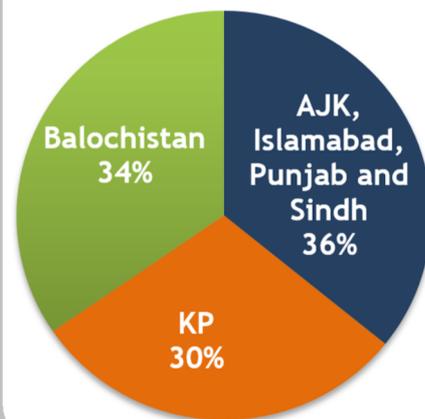




Arrests and detentions by location and year



Arrest/detention locations



Access to legal assistance and legal remedies

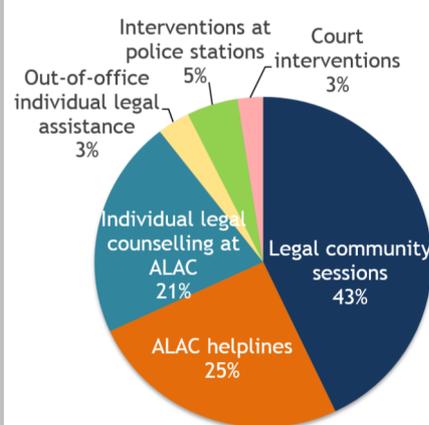
Advice & Legal Aid Centre (ALAC) activities in 2017 include the following: a) provision of legal intervention at police stations upon arrest/detention; b) court representation in the cases of arrest/detention and other issues regarding civil/family/tenancy matters etc.; c) individually facilitated indoor counseling (legal advice) at ALACs and through helplines; d) out-of-court legal assistance; e) legal sessions in the form of legal camps, *shura* meetings and facilitated group discussions; and f) coordination with and training for law enforcement authorities including border officials and the judiciary. In the month of November, SEHER in Quetta arranged theatrical performances on subjects related to legal assistance, harassment, voluntary repatriation and issues related to legal stay in Pakistan.

In December, partner staff provided **individual legal counselling** to **562** persons of concern who visited the Advice and Legal Assistance centres as well as legal advice to a total of **786** persons of concern through **ALAC helplines**. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification and registration exercise of undocumented Afghans were the issues of greatest concern observed during the reporting period. **Out-of-court/office legal assistance** was provided to **124** persons of concern mostly related to police harassment, PoR card, rental agreements and affidavits. In addition to court representations for arrest/detention cases under the Foreigners Act/preventive laws, ALAC lawyers also helped refugees to pursue 1 case related to financial dispute in local court.

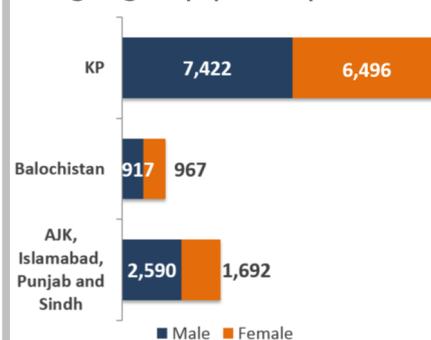
UNHCR and ALAC staff also organized a total of **45 legal camps and shura meetings** reaching **869 participants** (41% of whom were women) in the reporting month. 47% of the legal sessions were held in refugee villages and the remaining sessions in urban areas of Pakistan. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various protection issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of available free legal aid services.

3 training sessions were conducted for judiciary and LEAs and lawyers in Balochistan during the reporting month attended by 90 participants.

ALAC legal assistance activities for POCs



Legal group participation



UNHCR continues to deploy border monitors at the two official Pakistan-Afghan border crossings at Torkham (KP) and Chaman (Balochistan) in order to identify potential protection issues during border movements.

Refugee-police liaison committees were established in the districts of Mardan, Swabi, Buner and Malakand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after successful implementation in the districts of Charsadda, Peshawar and Nowshera to enable refugees directly approaching police.

Please note that there are 42 ALAC lawyers countrywide who provide the legal aid/assistance described above (29 in KP, 2 in Baluchistan, 5 in Punjab/AJK, 3 in Sindh and 3 in Islamabad).

UNHCR is expanding its legal assistance network through the identification of pro bono lawyers in addition to the existing ALAC legal aid program. During 2017, a pro-bono lawyers' network was formally established during an introductory two-day Workshop on Refugee Law and International Protection attended by 24 lawyers from across the country.