



**We Stand
#WithRefugees**

PRESS RELEASE

UNHCR News

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**Joint Press Release –
Afghan returnees face economic difficulties, unemployment**

Kabul, 14 July 2019 – Afghan refugees who returned to Afghanistan between 2014 and 2017 tend to be worse off financially and face multiple economic difficulties compared to refugees who stayed in Pakistan, finds a new joint report by the World Bank and UNHCR in Afghanistan.

The report entitled “Living Conditions and Settlement Decisions of Recent Afghan Returnees” is the first joint report resulting from the collaboration between UNHCR Afghanistan and the World Bank. The report analyzes the living conditions of the large Afghan refugee population that returned from Pakistan between 2014 and 2017.

The report shows that despite high poverty and limited employment opportunities, most Afghans returned to their home provinces, with Kabul and Nangarhar provinces together hosting a third of all returnees. According to the report findings, Afghans living in their province of origin were more likely to be employed, benefitting from established social ties. Lower access to education and healthcare services are other challenges faced by returnees and host communities, the report highlights.

“The living conditions of Afghan returnees are extremely challenging and require deep and urgent attention,” said Henry Kerali, World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan. “To understand the fundamental needs and challenges Afghan returnees face in their daily lives and to identify and agree on the best ways of addressing those challenges, access to accurate data and analysis is key. Our joint report with UNHCR helps increase coordination among partners and improve the work in support of Afghan returnees.”

“In 2019, we are marking 40 years of Afghan displacement, and while several programs are in place to assist returnees and facilitate their sustainable reintegration in Afghanistan, much remains to be done,” said UNHCR’s Representative in Afghanistan, Caroline Van Buren. “The data and analysis in this report will be crucial to UNHCR and our partners, including the Government of Afghanistan, as we try to improve the way we support Afghan returnees.”

The report assesses the existing challenges and identifies opportunities to further enhance returnees’ sustainable reintegration within Afghanistan’s socio-economic landscape. It recommends focusing on the voluntary and gradual repatriation of Afghan refugees as a long-term solution to forced displacement and encourages the Government of Afghanistan and its partners to put in place measures to facilitate the return in safety and dignity. The findings of the report will contribute to further expanding the close collaboration between UNHCR and the World Bank, including on projects that promote self-reliance and support the development of community infrastructure.

The full report can be found at: <http://wrlld.bg/1tFi30p2W4E>

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