



UNHCR and legal partner's staff conducting a Shura meeting in Jathlan, Mirpur

Legal Assistance
8,707

Arrest & Detentions
188

Interventions
136

Releases
187

Key Issues of Interest

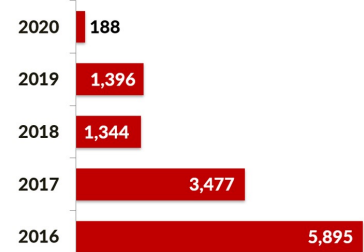
Nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) are operational in the main refugee hosting areas of Pakistan's four provinces and provide free legal support to persons of concern (PoCs). Eight of these centers are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), while one is run by SEHER in Balochistan, another UNHCR's partner.

In April 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of **1,871** PoCs. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for **32** arrested/detained PoCs and secured the release of all. In the majority of the cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested PoCs before they were formally charged by the law enforcement agencies. Most of them were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented **26** PoCs in courts who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of person acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defense of the country and public order) subsequently resulting in their release by the orders of the courts.

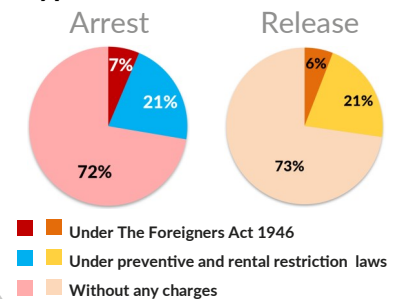
ALAC teams and the Ministry of SAFRON continue to take proactive steps to mitigate the risk of detention, including enhanced advocacy, pre-emptively intervening at police stations to prevent arrests and enhancing the response capacity of partners. UNHCR has developed and disseminated additional awareness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

When compared with April 2019 (222 Ind), there has been a decrease of **74%** in arrest and detention in April 2020 (58 Ind). It is deemed that the substantial decrease in the number of arrests and detention is linked with the COVID-19 emergency in the country. UNHCR highly appreciates Pakistan's generosity towards refugees and welcomes Government of Pakistan's (GoP) decision on consistent extension of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards until now. The present validity is until 30 June 2020. UNHCR hopes that the cards will be extended beyond June 2020. It will continue to disseminate the renewed PoR cards extension notification/s among refugee communities, law enforcement agencies through UNHCR staff and its partner organizations.

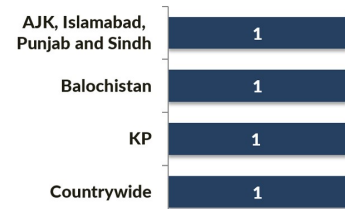
Arrest and Detentions by Years



Types of Arrests and Releases



Avg Length of Detention (days)*

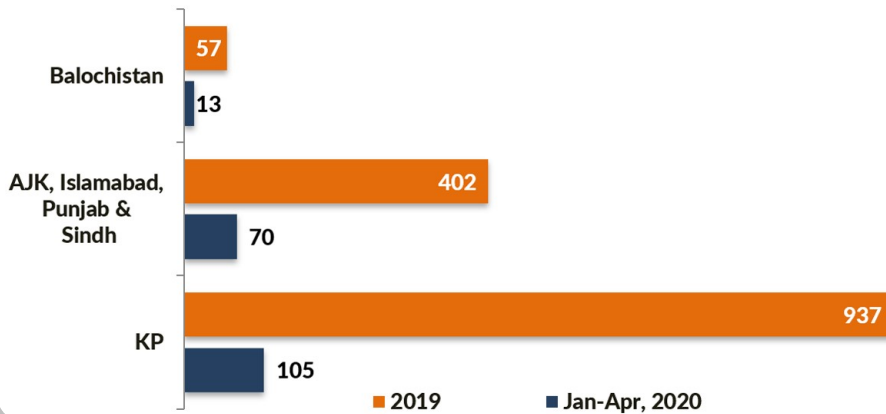


*Weighted proportionally by # of arrests in each province

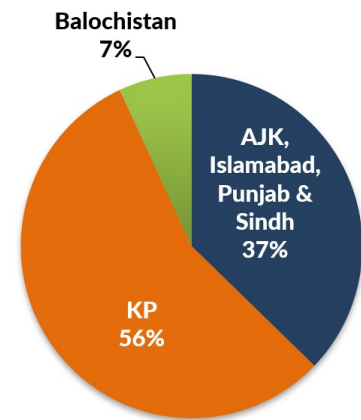
Arrest and Detentions by Months



Arrest and Detentions by Location and Year/Month



Arrest/Detention Locations



Access to Legal Assistance and Legal Remedies

Advice and Legal Aid Centre (ALAC) activities in 2020 include the following:

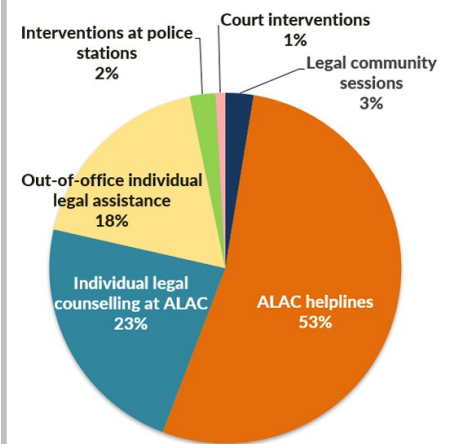
a) provision of legal intervention at police stations upon arrest/detention; b) court representation in the cases of arrest/detention and other issues regarding civil/family/tenancy matters etc.; c) individually facilitated counseling (legal advice) at ALACs and through helplines; d) out-of-court legal assistance; e) legal sessions in the form of legal camps, *shura* meetings and facilitated group discussions; and f) coordination with and training of law enforcement authorities including border officials and the judiciary.

In April, partner's staff provided **individual legal counselling** to **131** PoCs who visited the Advice and Legal Aid Centres as well as legal advice to a total of **1,300** PoCs through **ALAC helplines**. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modifications and asylum applications were the issues of greatest concern observed during the reporting period. **Out-of-court legal assistance** was provided to **329** PoCs, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.

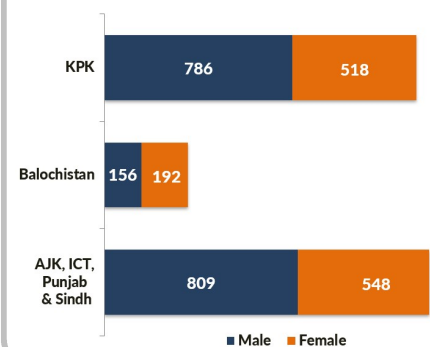
UNHCR and ALAC staff also organized a total of **6 legal camps and shura meetings**, reaching **27 participants** in the reporting month. All of the legal sessions were held in refugee villages of Pakistan. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of available free legal aid and UNHCR helpline services.

During the reporting month, no workshop for civil society and for Government officials was conducted due to COVID-19 outbreak in the country.

ALAC Legal Assistance Activities for PoCs



Legal Camp Participation



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

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

There are 33 ALAC lawyers countrywide who provide the legal aid/assistance described above (20 in KP, 2 in Balochistan, 5 in Punjab/AJK, 3 in Sindh and 3 in Islamabad/AJK).

UNHCR's legal assistance network is further augmented by *pro bono* lawyers network in addition to the existing legal aid program.