UNHCR facilitates voluntary repatriation for Afghan refugees who wish to return to their home country, once it is established that their return is voluntary, safe, dignified and durable. Since 2002, UNHCR Iran has supported nearly 1 million refugees to return to Afghanistan. However, as the situation in Afghanistan remains fragile, only a small number of Afghan refugees in the Islamic Republic of Iran have shown willingness and ability to return to their home country. For as long as they have to remain in Iran, UNHCR supports the host government in providing Afghans with health, education and livelihoods opportunities. Individuals who are healthy, educated and have marketable skills are typically more likely to return to their country of origin and feel capable of rebuilding their lives. Nonetheless, ultimately, a longer-term, political solution for Afghanistan’s protracted crisis is the only way to ensure safe, sustainable and voluntary return of refugees.

870 refugees repatriated in 2020

27% are students

17 persons have specific needs

49% are women

UNHCR helps returnees with specific needs including unaccompanied or separated children and elderly persons.

In March 2020, UNHCR suspended its VolRep activities as a preventive measure to reduce exposure of refugees, host communities and staff to COVID-19. In May, UNHCR partially resumed VolRep activities from its Field Unit in Dogharoun, in keeping with health and security measures, to assist refugees who have opted to return to Afghanistan.

Reason of return to Afghanistan (% of individuals)

- Financial problem in Iran: 28%
- Attain Student Visa for studying in Iran: 27%
- Live in CoO for the rest of my life: 16%
- Others: 8%
- Family member departed/living in CoO: 7%
- To get married in CoO: 2%
- Study in CoO: 0.5%
- Document problems of family member: 0.5%

Voluntary repatriation trends

Trend over the years (2011 - 2020)

Voluntary repatriation by province in Iran & intended area of return in Afghanistan

Voluntary repatriated from Iran

Intended return location in Afghanistan