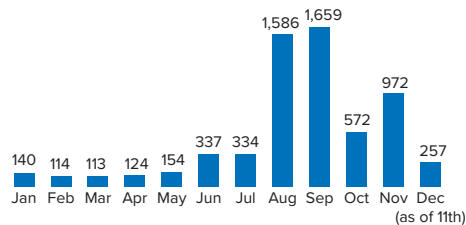


The situation in Afghanistan remains highly volatile. Over half a million of Afghans have been displaced in their country due to conflict and violence this year alone, amid what is now a humanitarian emergency of internal displacement. While Iran has not yet witnessed a major influx of refugees, UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of approaches by newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection. Most Afghans fleeing to Iran are doing so in an irregular manner through unofficial border crossings and with the help of smugglers, as official border points remain closed for entry to persons without valid passports and visas intending to seek asylum. The actual numbers of new arrivals to Iran are likely to be much higher than presented in this document – however, UNHCR currently lacks access to border areas and is only able to report on newly arrived persons of concern who have reached us through our hotlines and receptions. Therefore, UNHCR is not able to confidently confirm trends and figures. UNHCR has issued a non-return advisory for Afghanistan on 16 August, calling on governments to halt returns of Afghan nationals, including asylum-seekers who have had their claims rejected. UNHCR calls on countries to keep their borders open for Afghans seeking international protection, as well as for resettlement spaces to be allocated to Afghan refugees currently in Iran, with flexible criteria.

6,362
 newly arrived heads of household
 approached UNHCR
 (on behalf of **25,466** individuals)¹

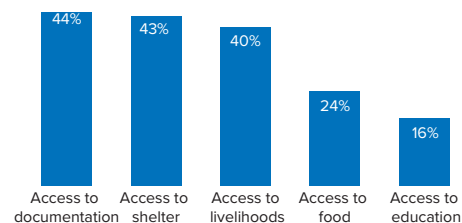


PROTECTION SCREENING OF NEWLY ARRIVED FAMILIES (17 AUG - 11 DEC)

1,917
 newly arrived heads of household
 screened
 (on behalf of **7,297** individuals)³

22% are female-headed households. In terms of ethnicity, 40% are Hazaras and 38% are Tajiks. 25% of all arrivals do not have any identity documents, and 24% crossed officially using passports with valid visas. This sample is not representative of all Afghans arriving in Iran, but provides insight into the profiles of new arrivals that are approaching UNHCR.

Top 5 needs reported in Iran⁴

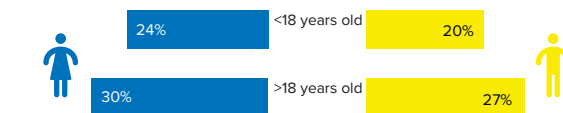


707
 out of **3,754** newly arrived individuals
 remaining in Iran
 (as officially communicated by BAFIA)²

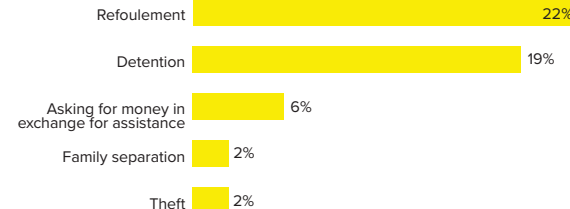
According to official figures shared by the Government of Iran to UNHCR, most of the 3,754 persons have returned to Afghanistan. Of the remaining persons, 107 individuals are currently being held in Al-Ghadir, in Sistan and Baluchistan province; an additional 600 individuals remain in Sefid Sang, in Khorasan Razavi province – this is a decrease from the previously reported 700 by the Government. It remains difficult for UNHCR to receive systematic updates on the number of newly arrived Afghans being held in border areas. Moreover, it remains challenging to ascertain whether the international protection needs of new arrivals are being assessed by the Government, and if so, if the assessment lives up to minimum standards, not to mention whether the reported returns to Afghanistan are indeed voluntary.

100%
 fled due to general security situation
 and/or specific security threats,
 27% fled due to discrimination

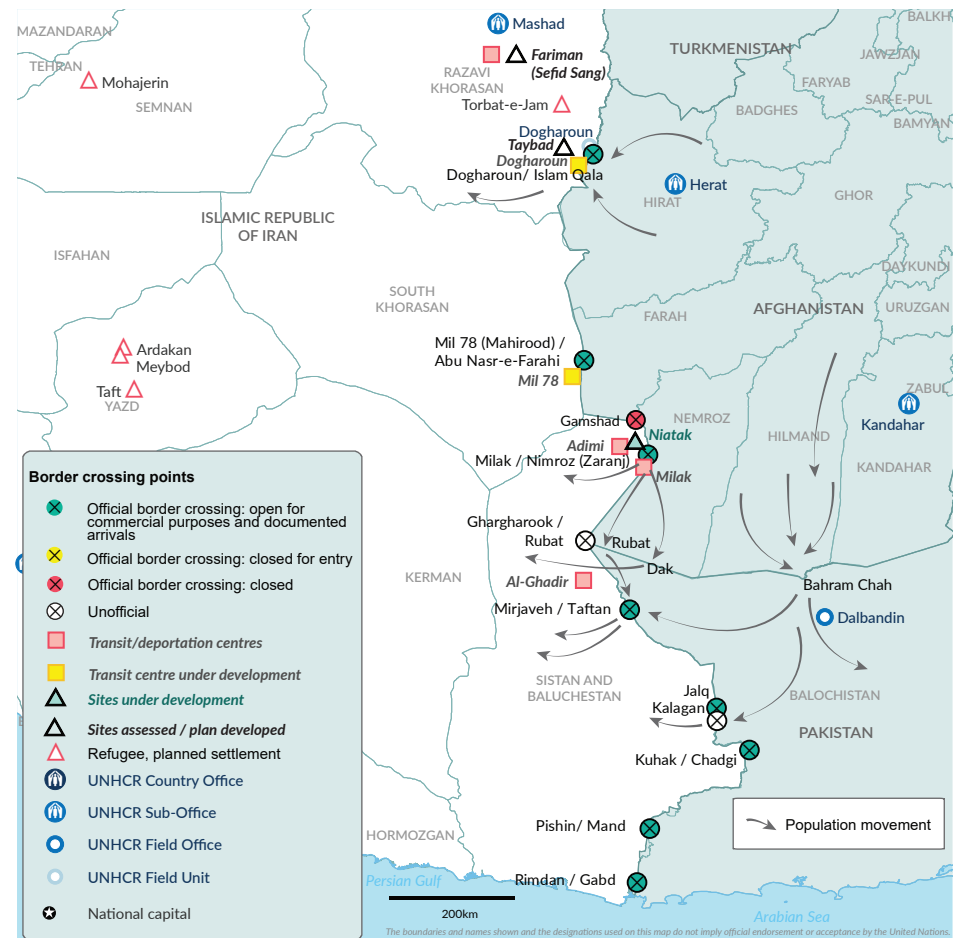
Age/Gender breakdown



Top 5 concerns reported by new arrivals in Iran⁴



MAP OF BORDER CROSSINGS AND PROVISIONAL SITES AS OF 11 DEC



While borders between Iran and Afghanistan were officially closed from 16 August, they are now open only for Afghan passport-holders with valid visas for Iran. The Government does not allow the entry of undocumented persons. UNHCR calls on countries to keep their borders open for Afghans fleeing the country. UNHCR and other actors are involved in discussions with BAFIA on developing potential sites in border areas that could host new arrivals for short periods of time.