

# Afghanistan

August 2024

UNHCR has assisted **108,100** Afghan returnees from Pakistan, including **68,100** Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders since September 2023. Around **49%** of the assisted individuals are women, and **2.4%** of the total assisted beneficiaries have disabilities.

Between 15 September 2023 and 31 August 2024, over **712,000** Afghans have returned to Afghanistan. At least one in four households assisted are headed by women. Around **33%** of returnees intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Lashkargah and Mazar-e-Sharif).

On 21 August, the De facto Authorities (DfA) issued a **new set of vice and virtue laws** signifying the first time that the DfA codify previous edicts in law. The laws cover aspects of everyday life, including public transportation, music, shaving, and celebrations.

## KEY INDICATORS FOR 2024

**659,004**

Individuals directly supported by UNHCR, receiving protection, cash, and in-kind assistance.

**54%**

of all individuals assisted in August are women and girls.

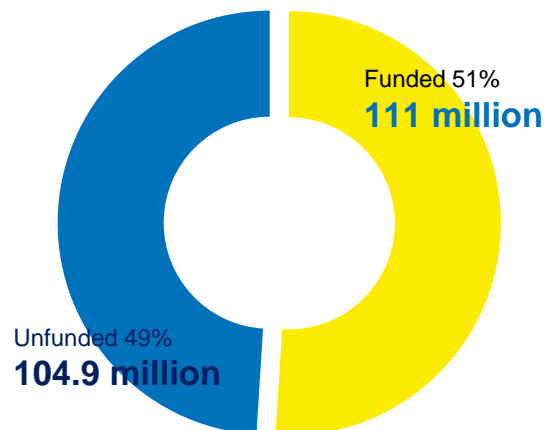
**446,472**

Individuals participated in assessments and monitoring exercises meant to understand gaps and inform

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2024)

**USD 215.9 million**

requested for Afghanistan.



Bashir, a recent returnee and UNHCR shelter beneficiary in Ashrafkhail village, Qarabagh district, Kabul province. ©UNHCR/Mushtaq Ahmad Munawarzada

# Update on Achievements

## Operational Context

Afghanistan has an estimated **3.22 million conflict-induced** internally displaced persons (IDPs), **1.57 million IDP returnees**, and hosts around **35,000 refugees**<sup>1</sup>, requiring immediate protection and humanitarian assistance, as well as medium to long-term support.<sup>2</sup> UNHCR has assisted **44,786 refugee returnees** who returned in 2024. Additionally, in 2024, an estimated **23.7 million** people – more than half of Afghanistan’s population – are projected to require humanitarian assistance<sup>3</sup>.

## Achievements



### PROTECTION

**UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Update:** UNHCR has assisted a total of 44,786 individuals (22,072 females and 22,714 males), including 3,964 (2,031 females and 1,933 males) in August alone, in refugee or refugee-like situations who returned to Afghanistan since 1 January 2024. Those assisted include Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) holders, Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders, UNHCR slip holders, UNHCR certificate holders, and undocumented family members, with the majority returning from Pakistan.

To date in 2024, over 5,100 individuals have been deported from Pakistan. The month with the highest level of deportations in 2024 was May (1,300), reaching higher levels than October 2023 (960), however, remaining lower than numbers recorded in November (24,500) and December (3,500) during the height of the Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan (IFRP) phase 1.

A total of 2,190 (1,420 males and 770 females) interviews, including 344 in August, were conducted by UNHCR protection teams with newly arrived returnees in 2024 as part of return/protection monitoring activities. Based on the returnee monitoring findings, the primary reasons of return continue to be linked to the protection concerns, including claim to fear of arrest and/or deportation, alleged abuse by police or state authorities, concerns related to the PoR card validity and

### Situation Map



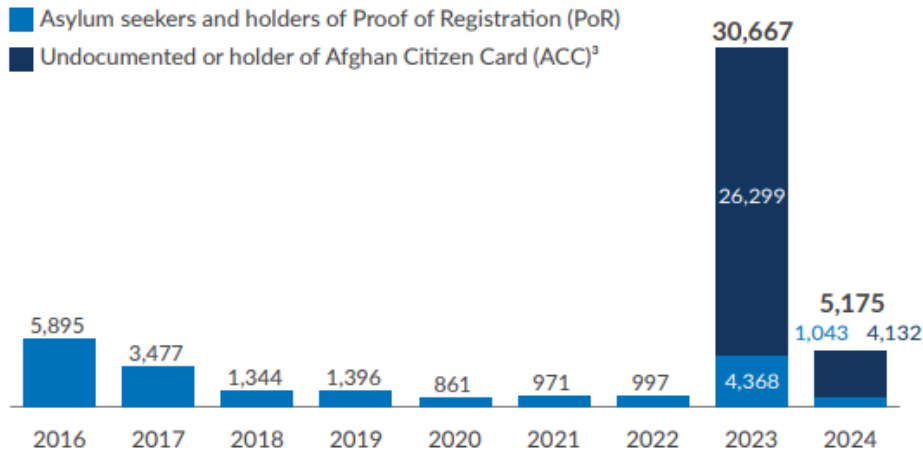
<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan Operational Data Portal

<sup>2</sup> These figures are expected to increase retroactively with ongoing assessments and considered indicative rather than overall statistical data of IDP returnees in Afghanistan.

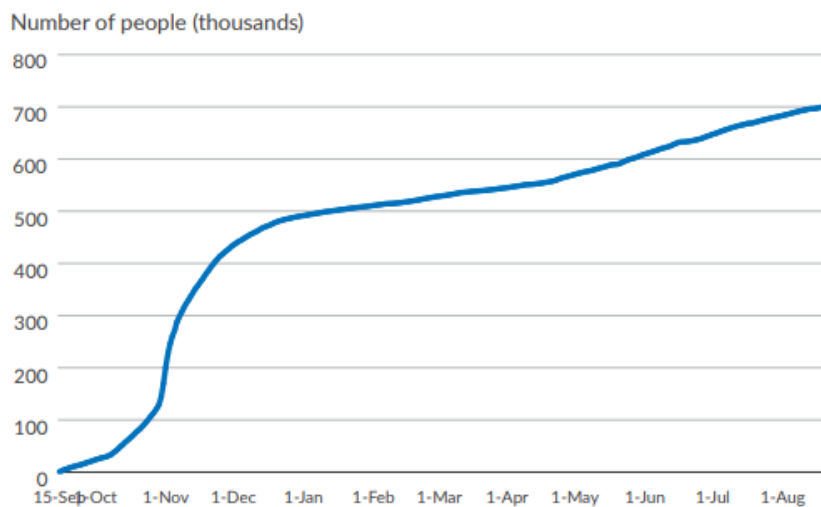
<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan

uncertainty related to its extension, concerns related to night raids, and strict border entry requirements, which limits the ability to commute to Afghanistan for temporary reasons.

**Arrests and detentions (from 2016 to 24 August 2024)**



**Total Returns from Pakistan since September 2023**



**Returnee Monitoring in Return Areas – Phone Survey**

In July 2024, UNHCR started a phone-based returnee monitoring exercise, targeting refugees’ returnees who returned to Afghanistan since 1 September 2023. Data was collected between 15 July and 1 September 2024 by UNHCR protection staff. A total of 4,443 household level interviews (including 18% female respondents) conducted with refugees returned between September and December 2023. Out of 4,443 interviews, 83% of the respondents mentioned that they currently live in five top provinces of return in Afghanistan (Nangarhar, Kabul, Kandahar, Helmand and Kunduz). The survey data captured information about returnees’ overall protection situation and coping mechanisms, including needs and challenges they face, as well as their overall socio-economic situation. This includes access to basic services and livelihood conditions, which are important factors for sustainable return and reintegration. The survey findings will be presented in September.

**Border Monitoring - Refoulement/Deportations:** Over 712,000 Afghans have returned from Pakistan since 15 September 2023, primarily through the Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossing points. The majority arrived in November 2023, following Pakistan's announcement of the IFRP in October 2023, setting a deadline of 1 November 2023 for undocumented foreigners to leave the country.

In August 2024, UNHCR conducted 13,607 household/individual level protection border monitoring interviews (inflow and outflow) with Afghans at eight official crossing points with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. During the same period, a total of 60 interviews were conducted at unofficial crossing points. Between 1 January to 31 August 2024, a total of 95,178 inflow and outflow monitoring interviews were conducted at eight official crossing points and 650 interviews at around 50 unofficial crossing points. During 2024, an estimated 623,650 Afghan passport holders departed for Iran via Islam Qala and Zaranj, including an estimated 139,000 individuals during August.

Between 1 January and 31 August 2024, an estimated 585,000 individuals travelled to Pakistan via Torkham (466,600) and Spin Boldak (118,400) and 626,400 returned via Torkham (471,000) and Spin Boldak (155,400) to Afghanistan. In the past years, the majority of the in/outflow movements were reported via Spin Boldak.

Angor Ada crossing point in Paktika province remains closed. However, Dand-Aw-Patan crossing point in Paktia province, and Ghulam Khan crossing point in Khost province are only open for commercial movements (trucks transporting goods either way).

UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance, reaching a total of 5,896 families (including 388 families in August), composed of 24,385 persons (1,245 individuals in August), compelled to return from Pakistan in 2024. The categories include Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum-seeker certificate holders, and other protection referrals.<sup>4</sup> Based on the protection/border monitoring information, UNHCR observed that the number of people compelled to return has been declining since April 2024, which could be due to the advocacy efforts carried out by UNHCR offices in Pakistan as well as Pakistan's decision not to implement the second phase of IFRP.

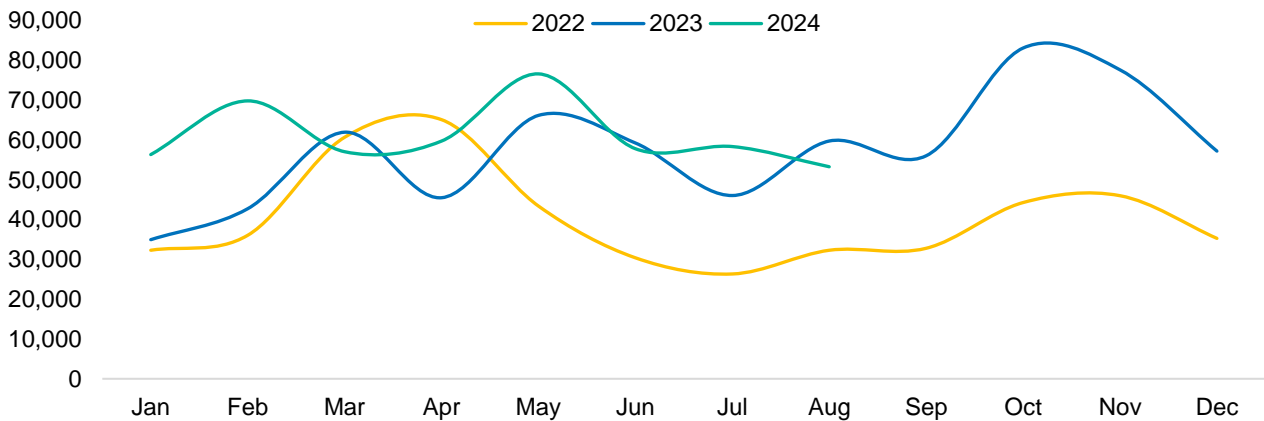
UNHCR's mixed-gender teams are stationed at the Spin Boldak and Torkham border crossing points, conducting protection interviews with the newly Afghan arrivals from Pakistan, including women returnees. Help desks are available to identify persons with sensitive protection backgrounds and to conduct referrals to available services, including to the UNHCR protection team for further assessment of protection concerns and needs. Shelter, livelihood, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene were identified as the most critical needs.

In the final week of August and following the endorsement of the new vice and virtue law by the DfA supreme leader, changes have not been observed along land borders i.e., Islam Qala, Zaranj, Spin Boldak, Torkham, Sher Khan Bandar, Hairatan and Aqina crossing points. The requirement for female travelers to travel with a male mahram is in place. No further restrictions on humanitarian agencies' staff operating in the crossing points were reported. Similarly, the requirement for females to travel with a male mahram through airports are in place.

---

<sup>4</sup> This only includes the number of returnees assisted through FARE.

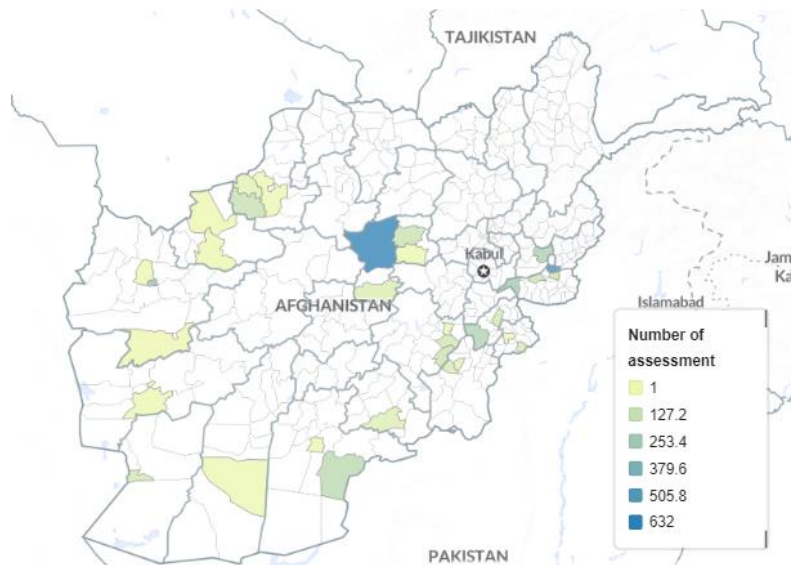
### Deportation of undocumented Afghans from Iran (1 January 2022 to 31 August 2024)



**Rapid Household Needs Assessments:** A total of 54,034 individuals were assessed using the Rapid Household Assessment Form (RHAF) and Community-Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM) in August 2024.

For RHAF assessments, in August, UNHCR completed a total of 5,777 assessments, across 51 districts in 19 provinces of Afghanistan, reaching 43,279 individuals (with children making up around 63% of household members (27,179 individuals). Female-headed households accounted for around 25% of the assessments, which shows an increase compared to July (21%). Over 60% of these households (3,135) facing more than one vulnerability.

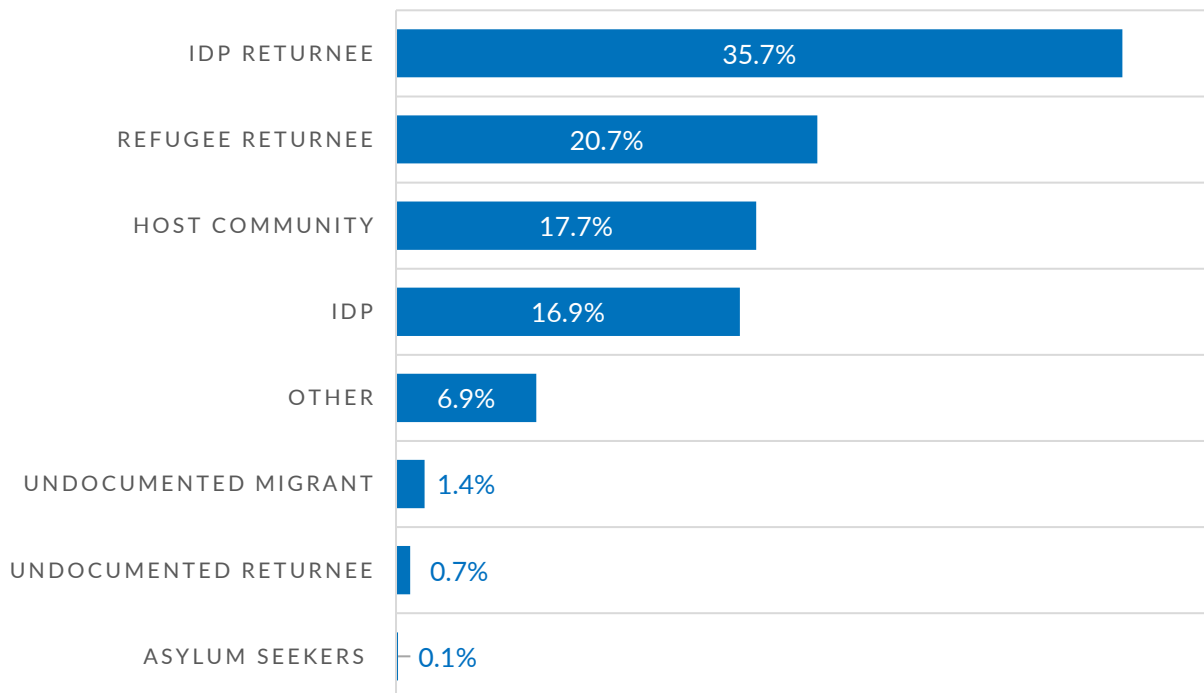
#### Location of Assessments Conducted



Overall, 37% of the respondents said that they have received assistance, while 63% mentioned that they have not yet received any assistance. Of those assisted, 64.8% mentioned that they have received food assistance, followed by non-food items (54.8%), cash (37.1%), shelter kit (2.8%) and hygiene kits (2.5%).

The RHAF assessments encompassed a diverse mix of participants from the host community, IDPs, IDP returnees, undocumented migrants, undocumented returnees, asylum seekers and refugee returnees, providing a broad sample for the survey. In August, 35.7% of the returnees assessed were IDP returnees followed by refugee returnees making up 20.7%, and host communities making up 17.7% of the respondents.

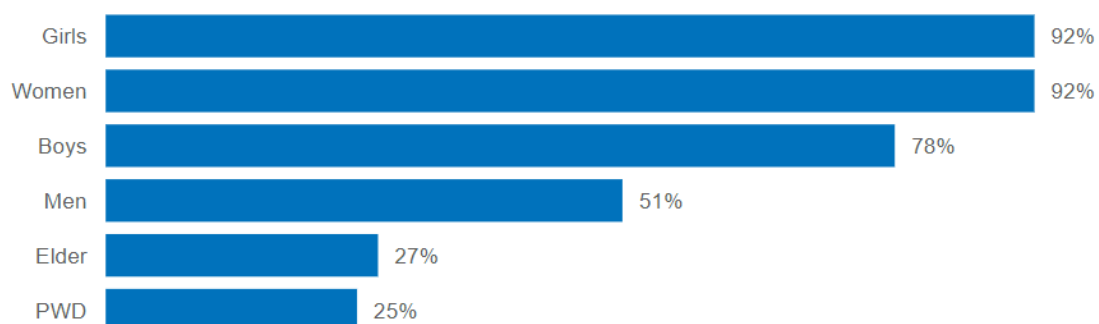
### Household Status of the Respondents



**Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM):** UNHCR used household surveys, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to monitor protection risks and coping mechanisms through its CBPM assessments in August 2024. A total of 572 male-headed households and 567 female-headed households were interviewed by UNHCR’s CBPM partners, as part of 1,139 household assessments, representing 7,973 individuals. Assessments were conducted in 75 districts of 28 provinces to collect household-level data.

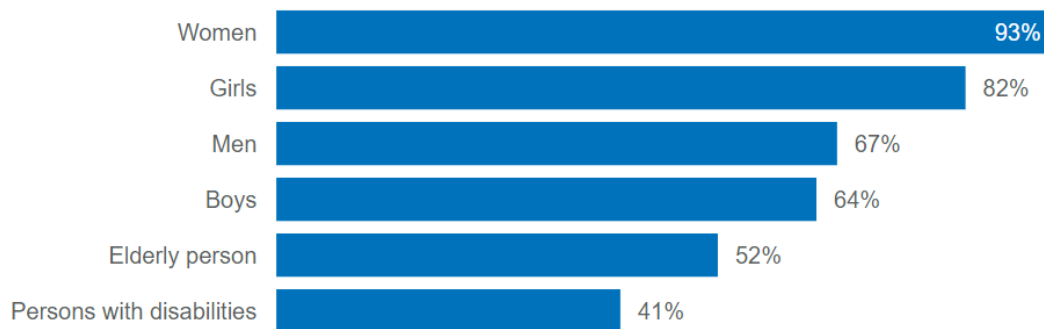
Assessment outcomes found that 63% of the respondents (IDP returnees, host community members, IDPs, refugee returnees, and undocumented returnees) reported that one of their household members lacked civil documentation. The age group of heads of households assessed includes 35-59 years (61%), 18-34 (30%), 60 and above (7%), and 14-17 (1%). Over 82% of the interviewees were from rural areas and 18% were from urban areas. Girls and women are the major groups not having legal documentation (please see below chart). UNHCR has embarked on legal assistance projects across the country to help address this problem.

### Which family members lack documentation?



Of the respondents, 64% mentioned that they or their family members were not able to receive MHPSS within the last three months with women/girls amongst the most affected groups.

**Were you/your family member able to access MHPSS services in the last three months? If no, which group?**



Moreover, 44% reported that they or their family members were not able to receive healthcare services in the last three months. Around 89% reported that they have not received food assistance in the last three months, and 59% do not have easy access to safe drinking water. Further, 58% of respondents mentioned that there are places that women and girls do not feel comfortable to visit, including education centres, marketplaces, water points and clinics due to discrimination, harassment and intimidation, lack of IDs, no mahram, safety concerns, and socio-cultural barriers.

UNHCR also conducted 442 interviews with 191 male and 251 female key informants in 76 districts of 28 provinces. The findings of the key informant interviews with IDP returnees, host community members, IDPs, refugee returnees and undocumented returnees reveal that 37% of the community members are unable to access services. The top five groups facing challenges to access services are female-headed households (85%), older person-headed households (66%), persons with physical disabilities (64%), child-headed households (56%) and persons with mental disabilities (47%).

The respondents mentioned that electricity, health, livelihood support, food assistance, water, and shelter are the main services they do not have access to. This is due to their inability to pay for services, lack of transportation or inability to pay for transportation, lack of information on services, no mahram, accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities, movement restrictions, discrimination, and interference.

A total of 468 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with women, men, girls and boys of different age groups and displacement statuses in 67 districts of 28 provinces. Around 50% of the respondents mentioned that there are no places for girls and boys working (under 18) to get support and assistance. Also, 37% said that there are recent arrivals in their communities.

**Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM):** In August 2024, a total of 4,635 questions, feedback, suggestions, and complaints were received by UNHCR and partners via the CFM, highlighting a decrease from the previous month. Although all channels remain available, internal capacities to receive queries were reduced due to the parallel rollout of a phone protection monitoring assessment targeting over 4,000 refugee returnees. The use of the CFM by women and girls remained stable with 40% of queries originating from women and girls, a slight decrease from the 42% reported in July. Host community members remained the category who most frequently used the CFM (30% of all queries), followed by refugee returnees (28%) and IDPs (23%).

Accounting for 37% of all queries, emails were the favored channel of communication (1,703), followed by hotlines (28%) and community outreach volunteers (COVs) and focal points (25%). This is consistent with the previous report, when hotlines, emails and COVs were also the top channels.

CFM operators provided a response to all queries. For 1,601 cases requiring tailored follow-up, referrals were made to relevant UNHCR Offices and partners. Around 56% of the queries recorded in August are already closed. Looking back at all the queries received since the beginning of the year, 68% are already closed.

**Persons with Specific Needs (PSN):** During the reporting period, the PSN interventions, including assessments, case reviews, cash assistance, and referrals continued. A total of 985 new assessments were conducted and 1,053 PSN cases were reviewed by the case approval committee, of which 269 were deemed eligible for cash assistance. Additionally, 484 cases were referred to the PSN network, of which 277 cases received both services (cash assistance and referrals).

**Community Engagement:** As part of UNHCR's strategic objective to enhance its accountability to the affected people and strengthen its engagement and communication with the communities, UNHCR has launched a country-wide pilot project establishing a network of community-outreach volunteers, nearly 50% of whom are female. Placing communities at the centre of the response and empowering them to become agents of their own protection has significantly improved UNHCR's outreach to the most vulnerable population groups, establishing effective two-way communication and ensuring access to information and services for communities in remote areas.

As of 31 August 2024, UNHCR's 145 community outreach volunteers and community outreach focal points have reached 92,097 community members through community dialogues, information desks and other outreach activities. A total of 78,472 individuals were informed about UNHCR's complaints and feedback mechanisms and 6,614 community members with protection risks were identified and referred for specialized services.

**Protection of Women:** UNHCR and its implementing partners facilitated 106 dialogues with 523 female and male community leaders, aiming to engage them as active partners in preventing and responding to violence in their communities and facilitating referrals to services. A total of 966 women and girls received support through counselling sessions to respond to the acute mental health needs of women and girls.

Over 2,957 women, girls, boys, and men were reached through information sharing activities, empowering the community with the necessary knowledge and skills about overcoming the negative impact of violence and harmful practices on individuals, families, and communities. Most importantly, these sessions aim to inform women and girls about available support, encouraging them to seek help and facilitating their safe access to multi-sectoral response services. A total of 13 women and girls were referred to different specialized services through interagency referral pathways. UNHCR's Women Community Centres provide a safe space for women and girls to engage in a variety of wellbeing and capacity-building activities, receive information on available services and topics of concern to the community and to seek support through direct interventions by UNHCR partners and referrals. Over 237 women and girls have attended different activities at UNHCR's centres in August.

**Child Protection:** In August 2024, UNHCR and its implementing partners successfully conducted awareness-raising sessions on child protection, focusing on topics, such as the importance of education, hygiene, and the risks and consequences of child labour. These sessions educated parents, children, and communities about child labour's legal and social implications while offering alternative resources. The initiative engaged a wide range of community members, with significant participation from women, girls, and persons with disabilities. A total of 2,820 individuals (1,245 males and 1,575 females) attended the awareness-raising activities in Kandahar, Herat, Bamyan, and Jalalabad. Additionally, 141 new cases of children facing specific child protection risks were identified and registered for case management services. Furthermore, 902 children benefited from psychosocial support and recreational activities provided in 12 Child-Friendly Spaces and after-school programmes.



**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS):** In August 2024, a total of 26,501 community members, including 9,763 women, 10,958 men, 2,587 girls, and 3,193 boys attended several MHPSS activities, including:

**Non-focused Specialized Services:** A total of 2,170 individuals received one-on-one psychosocial counselling services. These services are based on scalable brief psychological interventions, endorsed in Afghanistan.

#### **Community and Family Support:**

- Group psychosocial interventions were provided to the affected populations through UNHCR implementing partners. A total of 6,166 individuals attended these activities.
- A total of 108 individuals received family-based interventions in the form of psychosocial sessions. These sessions aimed at providing emotional support, active listening, and linking individuals to available services.

**Psychoeducation:** Psychoeducation and service orientation sessions were provided to community members. A total of 18,072 individuals attended these sessions, aimed to orient community members on mental health and psychosocial problems and available services.

**Capacity Building:** UNHCR Field Unit Kabul delivered a training session to Health-Net TPO, a UNHCR partner, in the eastern region on introduction to MHPSS, focusing on integration of MHPSS into protection, education, and health. A total of 14 staff, including six women and eight men participated in this session.

**Legal Assistance:** UNHCR partners in Gardez, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar continued to provide legal assistance to refugees, IDPs, refugee and IDP returnees and host community members. In August, some 133 legal awareness sessions were facilitated by partners, reaching 1,571 individuals, including 587 women. A total of 490 persons received legal counselling and 1,770 individuals accessed legal aid. The sessions addressed the importance of legal documentation to access a wide range of services and provided practical guidance on documentation procedures in Afghanistan. As a result of this legal assistance, a total of 570 documents were issued, including Tazkiras and birth certificates, showing an increase from July's 309 civil documents.



#### **SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS**

The construction of 800 earthquake-resilient shelters through the CBI modality is progressing in Giyan district of Paktika province with an overall progress of more than 70%.

A total of 158 earthquake-resilient shelters are planned for implementation in Herat province with a joint UN operation together with UNDP and UNICEF. The earthquake-resilient shelter provision in the western region will target 158 households affected by the Herat earthquakes in October 2023,

Of the 2,433 permanent shelters planned for 2024, 44 permanent shelters were completed in August 2024 in the southern region. Besides, the construction of 869 shelters (190 in Kandahar, 185 in Balkh, 251 in Kunduz, 193 in Bamyán and 50 in Kabul) is in progress in different construction stages. The remaining 1,224 shelters are under the preparatory phase and the construction will be started in the coming days. The selection of beneficiaries has been completed for 1,926 households, based on the shelter vulnerability criteria.

Major repairs for 647 out of 747 shelters in Baghlan, Kunduz, and Herat provinces have been completed as of 31 August 2024. This brings a total progress of major repairs to 87% by the end of August 2024.



UNHCR provided cash assistance to 5,627 individuals (2,982 females and 2,645 males) in August through various CBI programmes, including FARE, VolRep, cash for livelihood (SMEs & Job Placement), CARE (for refugee returnees) and cash for work. The assistance, which covered a wide range of services, has also supported families to reintegrate, address protection and other lifesaving concerns, and contributed to durable solutions. UNHCR continues to provide cash assistance to refugees and persons in refugee-like situations to assist families in meeting basic needs and contributing to sustainable reintegration processes.

## Acknowledgments

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



## External Relations

### CONTACTS

**Saorlaith Ni Bhroin**, Senior External Relations Officer, Afghanistan  
 nibhroin@unhcr.org, Tel: +93 70 346 5623

**Josephine Karlsson**, Reporting Officer, Afghanistan,  
 karlssok@unhcr.org, Tel: +93 70 246 5664

### LINKS

[Data portal](#) – [X \(Twitter\)](#) - [Facebook](#)