PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN

Returns Emergency Response

as of 5 November 2024

Key figures

761,200 total returns[1]

591,500
78%

115,800 UNHCR-assisted

111,400
96%

36,100 deportations

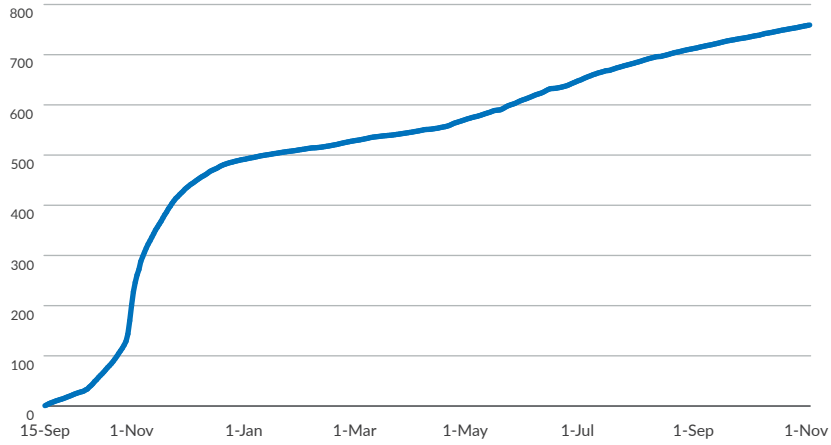
34,700
96%

Out of the overall returns **50%** are female, of which **29%** are girls. **59%** are children.

Blue figures above correspond to the period of 15 September 2023 to 5 November 2024, while the **navy figures** refer only to those who arrived from 1 November 2023 to 5 November 2024.

Total returns since 15 September 2023[2]

Number of people (thousands)



Context

On 3 October 2023, Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsed a plan to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, largely Afghans, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November.

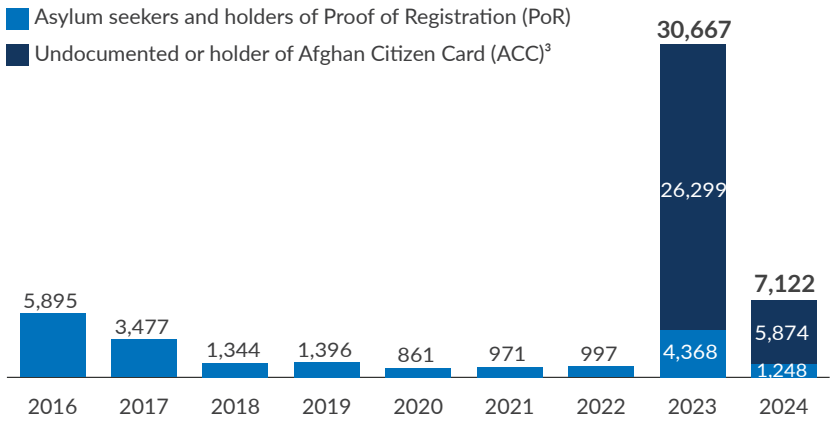
Since 15 September, **over 761,000 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan.** An average of **23,000 have returned in each of the past two months**.

In 2024, **some 6,800 individuals have been deported.** Trends show a continuous decrease since July (970), however **October (over 830) records an increase compared to September (580).**

Over **7,100 have been arrested or detained in Pakistan this year.** October alone recorded **some 800 arrests/detentions.**

UNHCR has assisted close to 116,000 returnees.

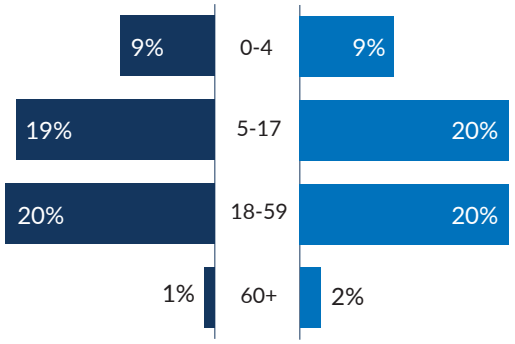
Arrests and detentions (from 2016 up to 19 October 2024)



Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan by Demographic profile

49% of assisted are **Female**

51% of assisted are **Male**



Out of those assisted **2.5%** have disabilities

Gender breakdown of head of households

31% are **Female**

69% are **Male**

Situation map

[1] *An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented.*
[2] *Return figures from 19 October 2024 onwards may fluctuate till validation process is concluded.*
[3] *Prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals.*

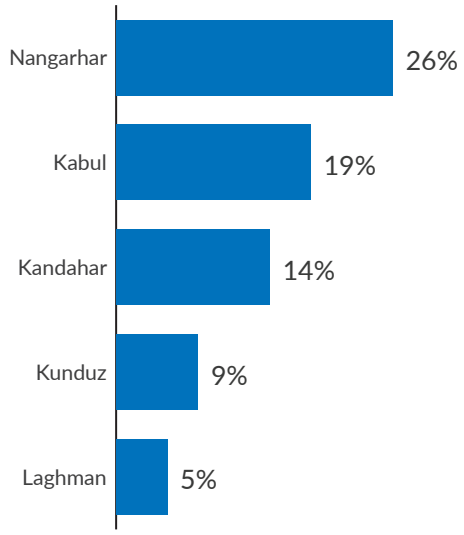
Sources: UNHCR, IOM

Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan

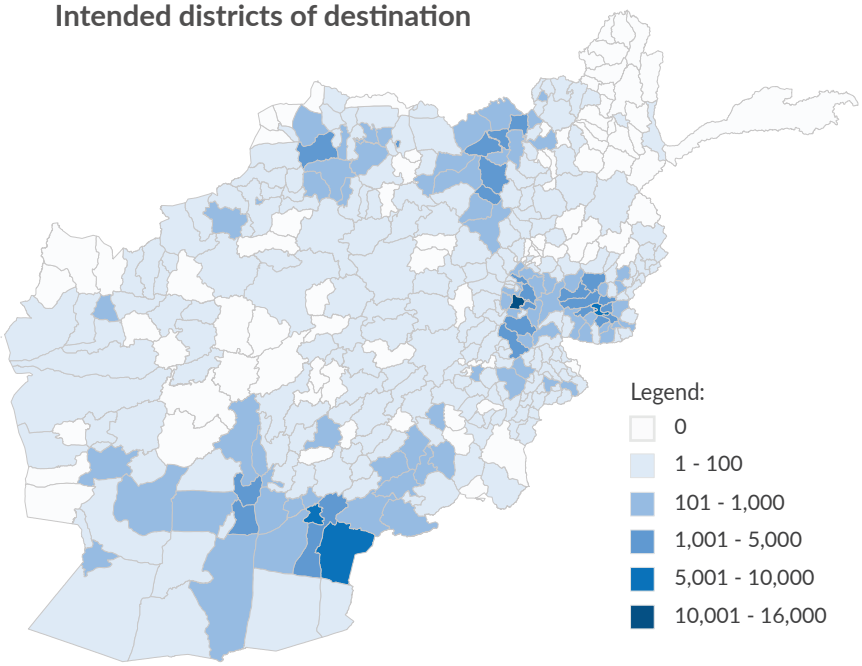
In Afghanistan, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other Protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 115,800 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad encashment centres, including over 74,500 PoR cardholders. Out of the assisted, some 2.5% are individuals with disabilities and over 3,000 PoR card holders, UNHCR slip holders and Asylum certificate holders were deported.

The district with the highest percentage of intended return is Kabul (12%), followed by Kandahar (7%), Bihsod (6%), Jalalabad (6%), and Spinboldak (5%). Almost one-third of the households assisted are headed by women. 33% of them intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Kunduz).

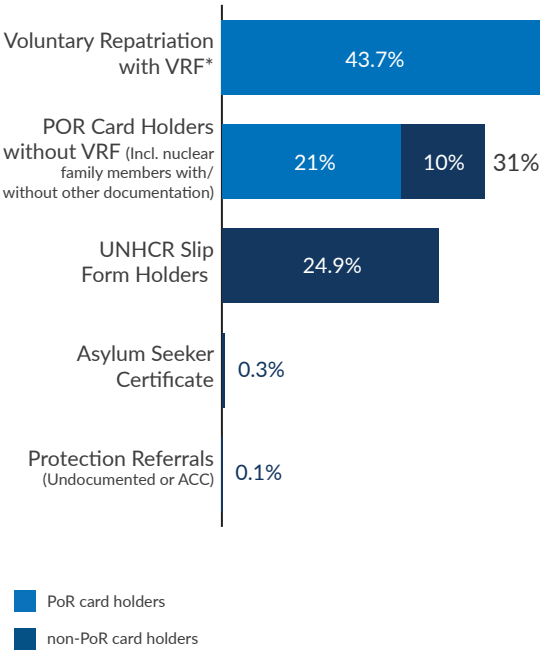
Top 5 provinces of intended destination



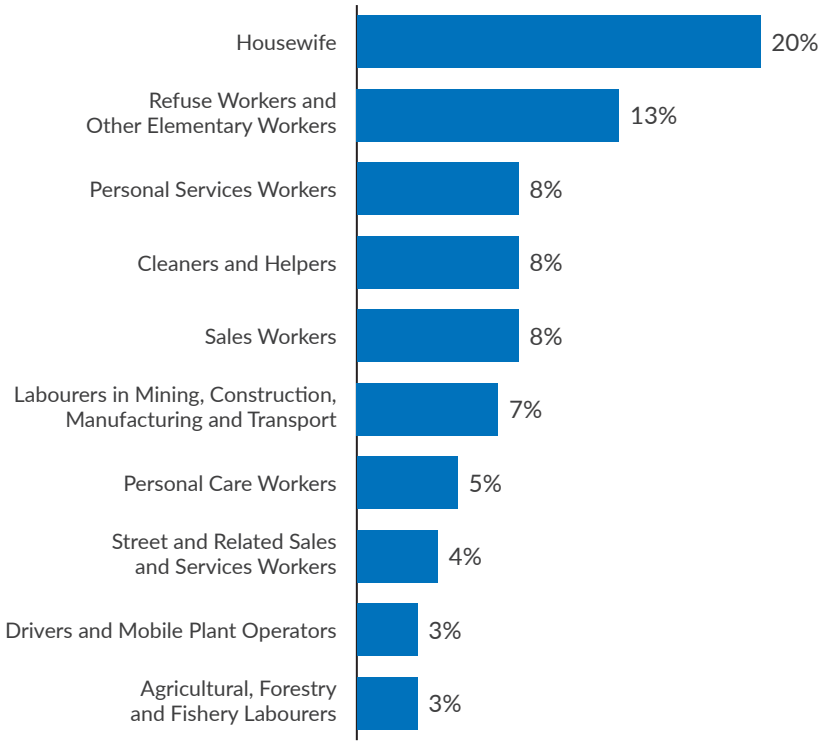
Intended districts of destination



Documentation status



Top 10 occupation of the head of households

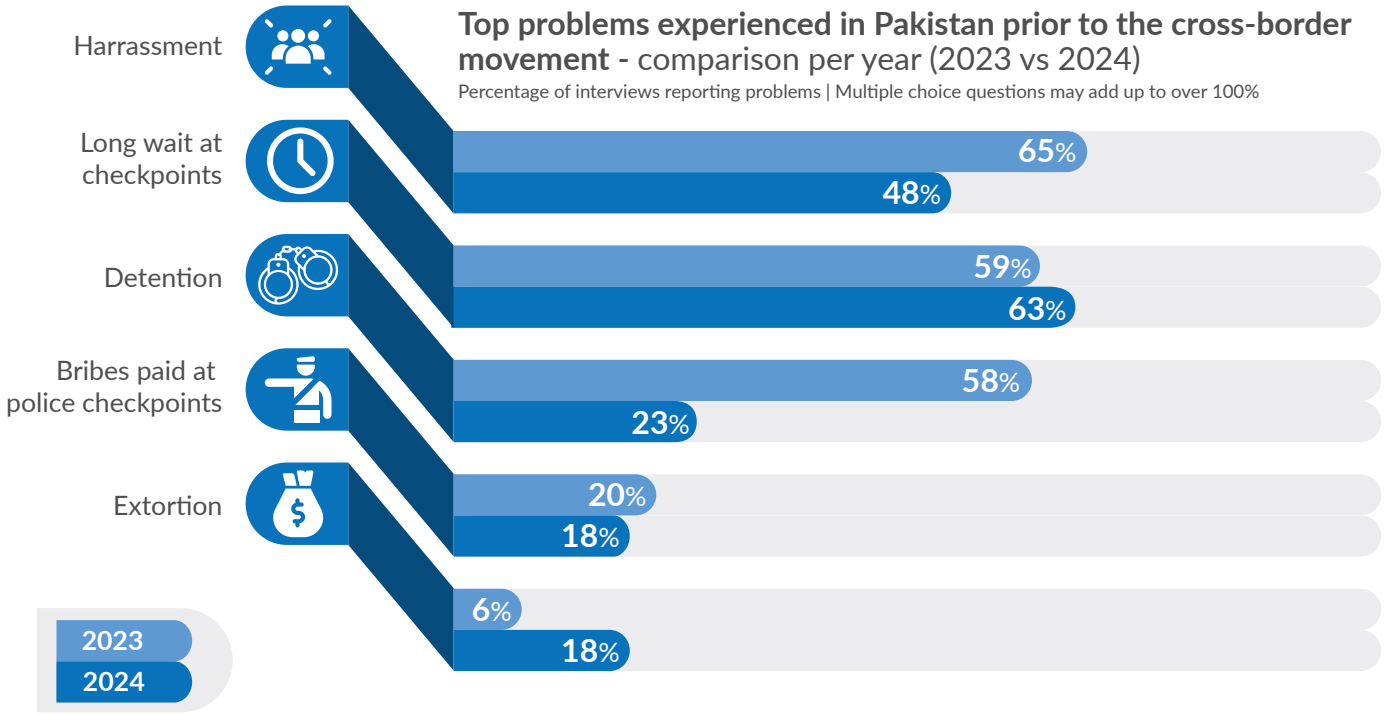


** Voluntary Repatriation Form.*

Border Protection Monitoring

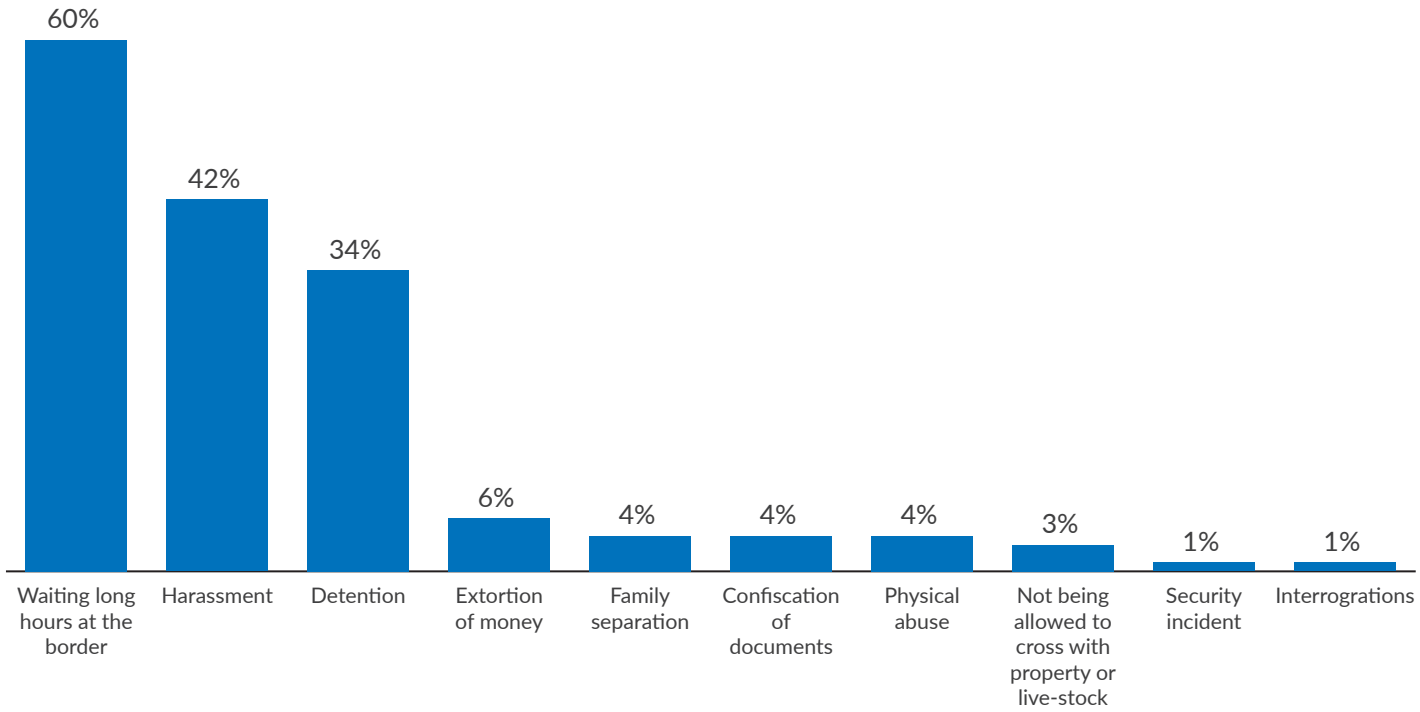
UNHCR and its partner Wadan in Afghanistan have scaled up protection activities at the border. Daily presence consists of Border Protection monitoring through interviews with returnees including deportees in order to identify protection concerns and risks, as well as their intended areas of return in Afghanistan. Five help desks have been set up to boost protection screening interviews, identification and referral of individuals to be assisted by UNHCR.

Since 12 November, the most reported problems experienced prior to the cross-border movement have consistently been harassment, waiting long hours at checkpoints and detention.



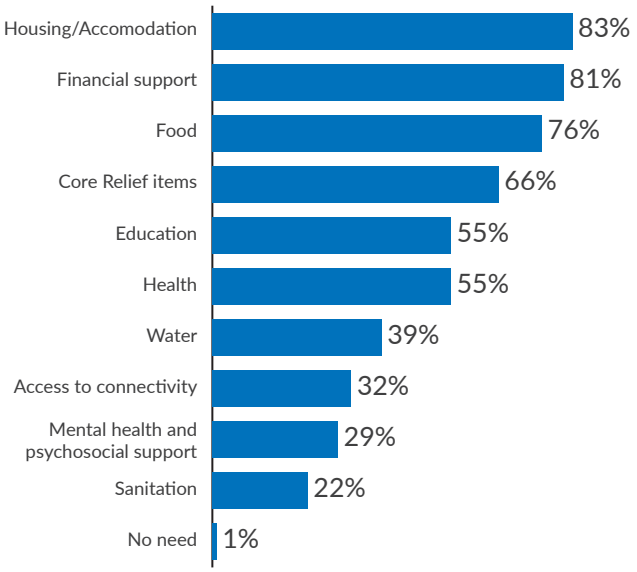
Problems experienced at the Pakistan border point

Percentage of interviews reporting problems | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



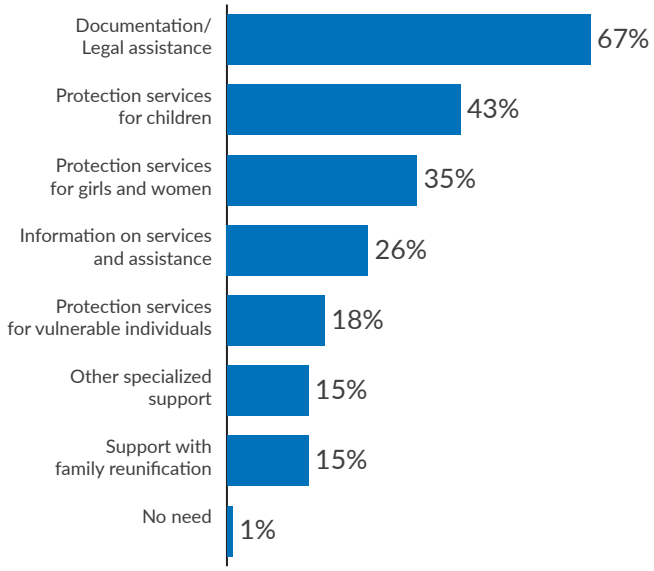
Needs upon arrival in final destination

Percentage of interviews | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



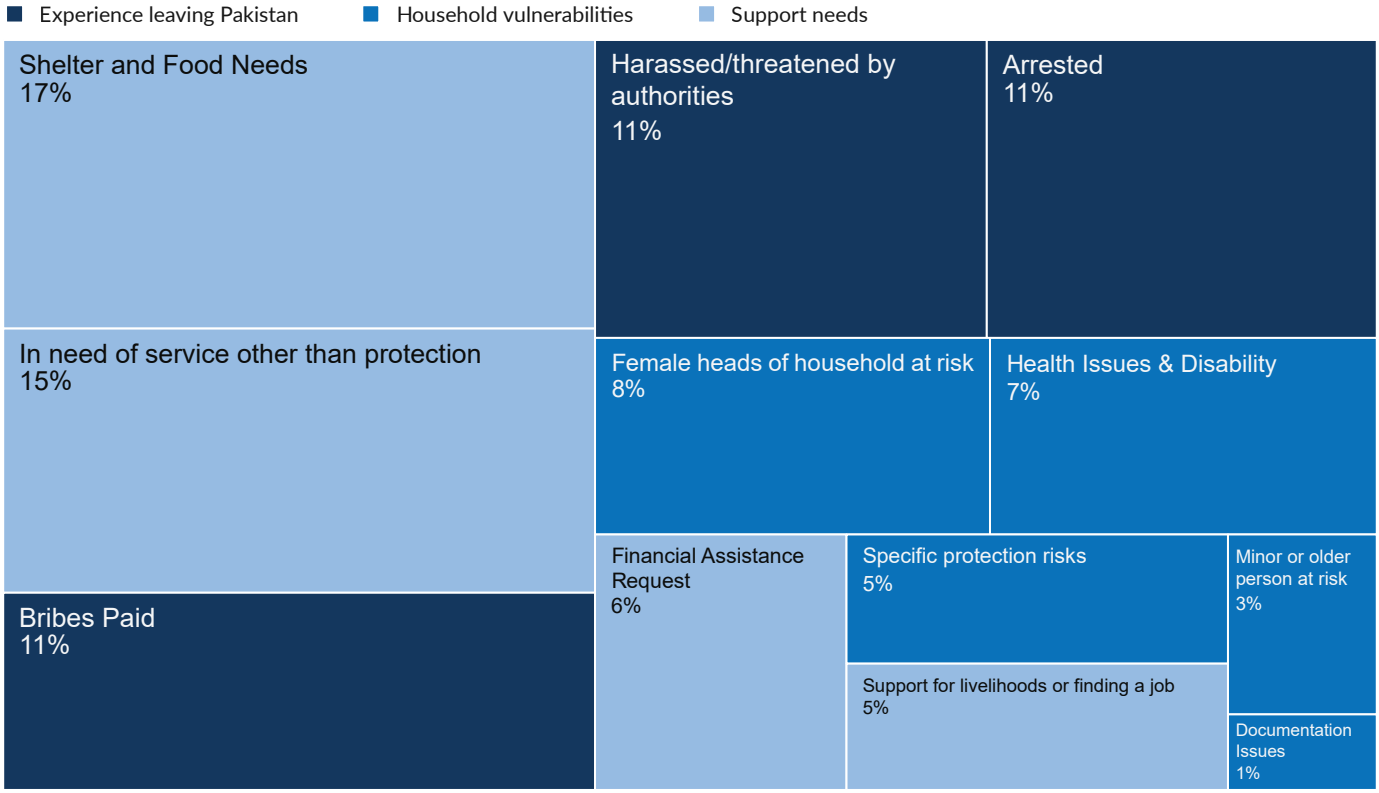
Protection services required in final destination

Percentage of interviews | Multiple choice questions may add up to over 100%



Protection Analysis - using natural language processing

In addition to the border monitoring interviews, returnees who are enrolled and provided with cash assistance are asked to elaborate on topics that they would like to highlight to UNHCR. The descriptive experiences and perceptions shared were analysed with Artificial Intelligence using natural language processing for semantic similarities and patterns.

The analysis done with a word count of 37,991, found 12 detailed clusters shown below. These 12 clusters can be broadly categorized into experiences leaving Pakistan, specific vulnerabilities in the household and requests for support to meet needs in Afghanistan. Amongst the 12 clusters, shelter and food needs, in need of service other than protection, paying bribes and experiences of harassment and threats were the top four most highlighted.

The top highlighted clusters vary with documentation status. For UNHCR Slip holders specifically, paying bribes was the most highlighted cluster followed by needing services other than protection. For those without documentation, in need of support other than protection services was the most frequently mentioned followed by bribes and female heads of households at risk. The protection risks faced by single women was also the most frequently mentioned by women heads of household.