UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

IRAN PROTECTION DASHBOARD

JAN TO DEC 2021

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The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, first opened its office in Iran in 1984 and has since maintained an uninterrupted field presence countrywide. UNHCR's main government counterpart in Iran is the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior. UNHCR also collaborates with other government ministries and organizations, as well as local and international NGOs and other UN agencies, to help ensure that all refugees have covered their basic needs and can access services. UNHCR works with refugee communities and assists the most vulnerable. Through the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR works with the government to support the inclusive refugee policies, in particular in health and education.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

In view of widespread instability in Afghanistan, as part of its protection mandate, UNHCR continues to advocate for an open and accessible asylum system for all. Some among the undocumented population may have international protection needs, particularly as the situation deteriorates in Afghanistan, for which they need to be properly screened and identified. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to advocate for the extension of temporary protection and documentation to this group, in particular the most vulnerable, who are also indirectly supported through the existing inclusive education and health programmes put in place by the Iranian Government and supported by UNHCR.

2.6 M undocumented Afghans

311,000 Passport with valid visa

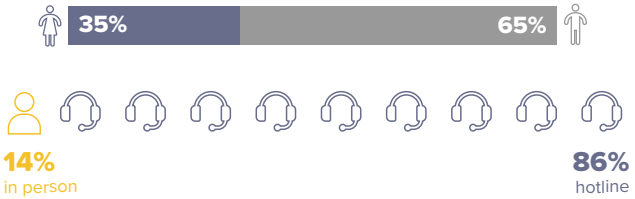
275,000 Afghan family passport holders

800,000 Afghan & Iraqi refugee card holders

out of which **780,000** are Afghans & **20,000** are Iraqis

RECEPTION

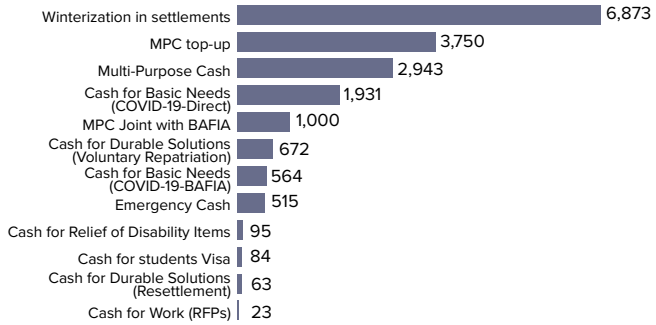
In 2021, **21,123** individuals contacted UNHCR more than one time (43,101 approaches), out of which 4,092 were newly registered in proGres. The large majority of them were refugees (*Amayesh* card holders 84%, asylum-seekers 11% and other of concern 5%).
In addition to Afghan nationals approaching UNHCR for support, some Iraqis and other nationalities also contacted the offices.



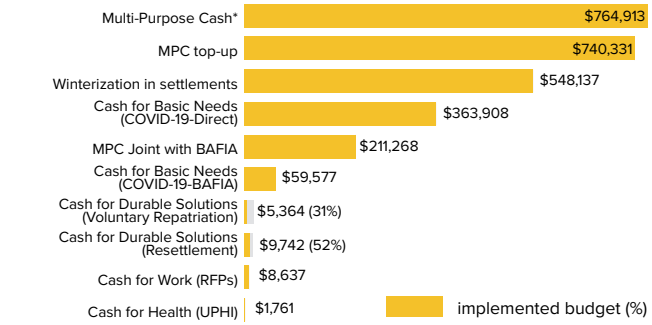
CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS

80,626 individuals (18,528 households) in total received cash assistance from UNHCR. Due to different vulnerabilities, some households received cash assistance more than one time.

CBI BENEFICIARIES BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



BUDGET BY ASSISTANCE TYPE

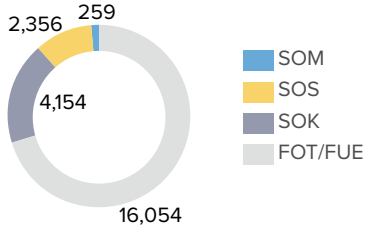


* It also includes Emergency Cash budget.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

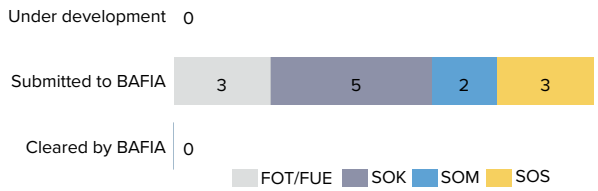
Given COVID-19, offices have largely been engaging with PoCs virtually/ remotely, The topics covered include C19, updates on the national vaccination plan, , the launch of the 7th cycle of UPHI, livelihood opportunities & regulations, school enrolment, access to banking facilities. Due to the increased number of new arrivals approaching offices since mid-August, several offices have also been - conducting in-person awareness raising sessions for new arrivals, with a focus on clarifying UNHCRs role in resettlement, RSD, and documentation.

REFUGEES ENGAGED IN AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES



13 community-based projects, developed by UNHCR offices, in collaboration with PoCs and local authorities, were submitted to our Central government counterpart for clearance (11 in late May and 2 in early August). The projects cover topics such as stress management and mental health during the pandemic, awareness raising and distribution of hygiene kits, virtual sports competitions for children, support to children engaged in child labor and positive parenting. Despite advocacy at several levels, no response has been provided on the projects, and therefore the respective budgets have had to be reallocated for 2021. UNHCR continues to advocate for the clearance of the projects for implementation in 2022.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS



*UNHCR recognizes Amayesh card holders as refugees. **According to the data received from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in October 2020, on which consultations are ongoing, 800,000 refugee card holders reside in Iran.
Disclaimer: the boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. ***PoC refers to Persons of Concern to UNHCR.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

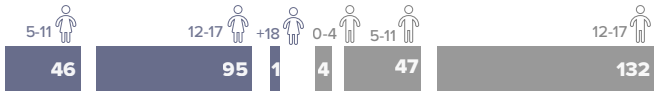
It is estimated that one in five people in conflict-affected settings suffers from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, complicated grief, or other mental health conditions. In order to address the mental health needs of refugees approaching us, UNHCR Iran has contracted one Psycho-Social Counsellor (PSC) per office to provide part-time individual and group counselling services to PoCs in need. The data below covers the second, third, and fourth quarter of 2021 (April-December).

320
Psychosocial support beneficiaries

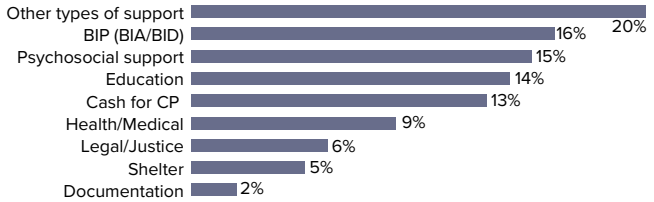
CHILD PROTECTION (CP)

Protection risks for children from vulnerable families continue to be reported across the country. Number of cases with CP/GBV claims is concerning, including school drop- outs, child labour, forced/early marriage, physical assaults and domestic violence.
Since the start of unrest in Afghanistan, a new profile of UASC is observed more that before in Iran: the children are either separated from their parents who are still in Afghanistan and ended in Iran usually irregularly or whose parents engaged in onward movement to West but did not manage to take them for various reasons. In the absence of CP partners and working relations with State Welfare Organization, the scope of UNHCR's work with regard to this group and other children remains limited. New opportunities might rise in near future to find durable solution for some of the UASC children in framework of RST, while BID procedures are already in place and will be strengthened.
Around 30,000 applicants have so far filed applications in the framework of the new Nationality Law to receive Iranian nationality, out of which, Shenasnameh (birth certificates) have been issued only for around 5,000 children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers. The needed security check are understood to be the main slowing reason of the process.

325
reported child at risk



TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRALS

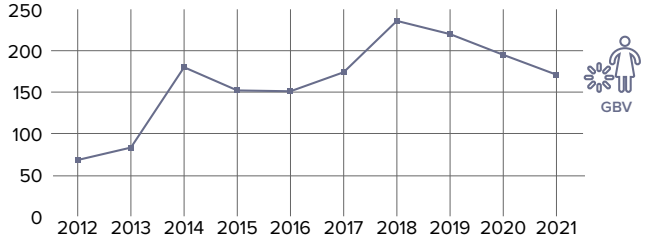


GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

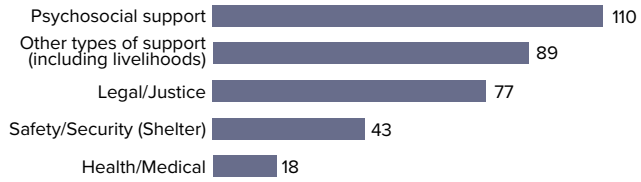
There are indications that GBV incidents have increased across the country since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, i.e. the State Welfare Organization reported a significant rise in child abuse cases, calls to hotlines for family disputes and psychological violence in different provinces. The number of survivors who reported to UNHCR as of end December 2021 (171 individuals) is lower than the number of individuals reporting during the same period in 2020 (195 individuals). Limitations in terms of mobility or privacy, caused or worsened by the pandemic, and therefore lack of access to reporting channels may be among the reasons that could explain why a large increase in incidents has not been reflected in UNHCRs statistics.

171
reported GBV survivors

TREND: REPORTED SGBV SURVIVORS



SGBV RESPONSE



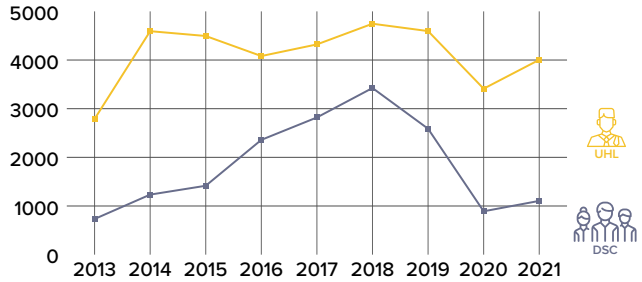
LEGAL SERVICES

In 2021, the majority of the cases that UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs) supported, concerned "Family law matters", "Criminal matters" and "Civil and financial matters". "Family disputes", followed by "Financial disputes" and "Wage-related disputes" were the three most frequent areas that Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs) intervened on. Although refugees have access to Iranian courts, the DSCs offer an alternative and free of charge dispute resolution mechanism that complements judicial processes by finding amicable solutions in civil matters involving refugees. The drop in the trend from 2018 is explained by a change in the reporting methodology to reflect the number of beneficiaries instead of approaches which deepened in 2020 as a result of a temporary recess and slow down in activities due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

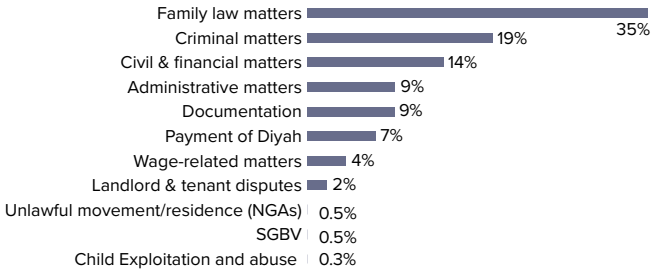
1,105 PoCs supported through **16** Dispute Settlement Comittees (DSCs)

4,005 PoCs supported by **17** UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs)

TREND: UHL & DSC CASES



UHL TYPES OF CASES



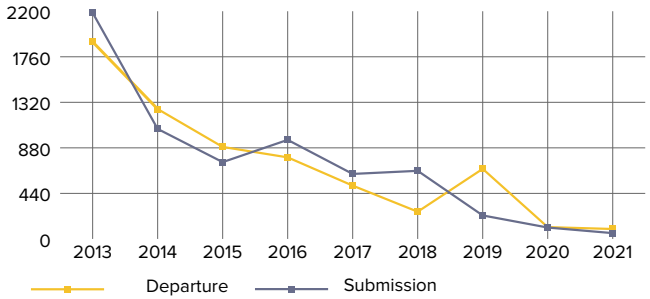
RESETTLEMENT

By the end of 2021, UNHCR Iran has received no RST quota. Using the countries unallocated quota, the office submitted 24 individuals to Sweden, 13 individuals to Norway, 13 individuals to Finland, 5 individuals to France and 1 individual to the Great Britain through HQ (total 56 individuals). During this period, 22 individuals were departed to New Zealand, 20 individuals to the Great Britain, 18 individuals to Iceland, 16 individuals to Sweden, 9 individuals to Norway, 6 individuals to Australia, as well as 5 individuals to Finland. (total 96 individuals)

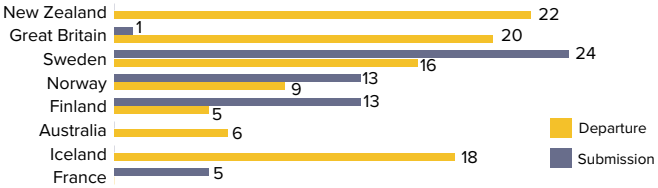
56
submitted to the hosting countries for consideration

96
departed to the hosting countries

TREND: RESETTLEMENT



SUBMISSION AND DEPARTED COUNTRIES

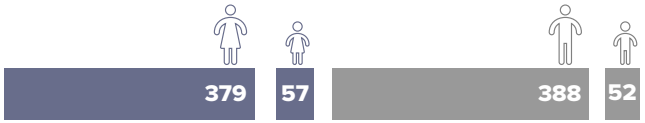


VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

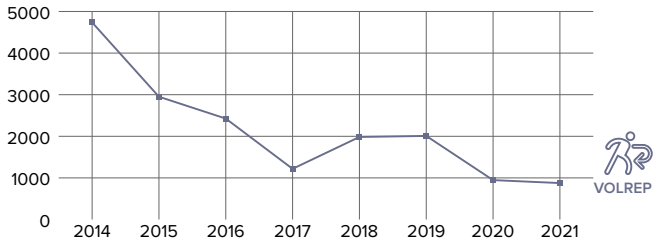
By the end of 2021 UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 865 Afghans and 11 Iraqis to their home country. This represents a slight decrease compared to the 948 repatriations facilitated in the same period in 2020. Considering the size of the Afghan population in Iran, the overall number of registered refugees returning to Afghanistan remains very low. Following the issuance of the non-return advisory for Afghanistan on 16 August, UNHCR remains cautious and continues to provide enhanced counselling to prospective returnees on the situation in their final destinations and routes thereto, particularly to those with more vulnerable profiles, on a case by case basis. 57% of Afghans repatriated with the intent of obtaining an Afghan passport and Iranian visa to pursue higher education in Iran.

865
Afghan refugees voluntary repatriated (including students)

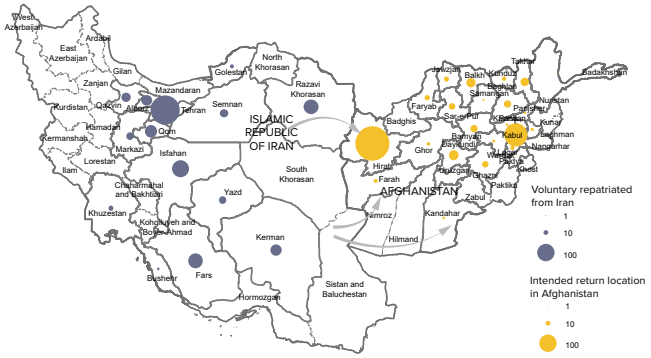
11
Iraqi refugee voluntary repatriated



TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

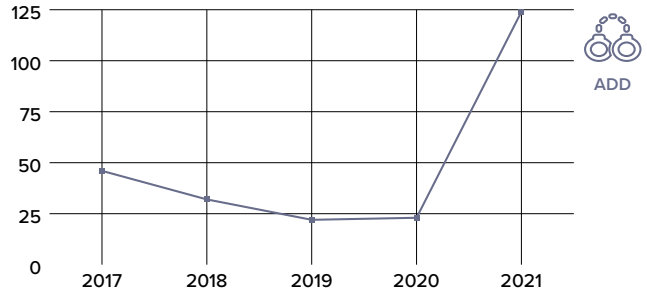


REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN



ARREST, DETENTION & DEPORTATION (ADD)

Whilst UNHCR keeps track of Arrest, Detention and Deportation (ADD) incidents directly reported to UNHCR by affected PoCs (mostly relatives of deportees), these incidents represent a minimal portion of the total number of deportations taking place from Iran. In 2021, only 51 ADD incidents concerning 124 individuals were directly reported to UNHCR. “Irregular movement to Iran” was the main reason of arrest, followed by “Illegal border crossing” and “Not having valid document”.Afghans without valid documentation are at risk of being arrested, detained, and deported. *Amayesh* Card holders must obtain a Laissez-Passer (travel permit) from BAFIA authorities for traveling outside their designated province of residence. As per figures made publicly available by authorities in national media outlets 140,710 undocumented Afghans were deported only between 21 March and 8 of July representing an 85% increase in deportations countrywide compared to last year.

124
individuals

TREND: ADD