

The situation in Afghanistan has remained highly volatile since the onset of security developments in August 2021. Since 2021 around 1 million Afghans have been displaced in their country due to conflict and violence, amid what is a humanitarian emergency of internal displacement and acute food insecurity, with continuing concerns about targeted violence and human rights violations. UNHCR Iran 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. UNHCR currently lacks sustained access to border areas and is only able to report on newly arrived Afghans who have reached us through our hotlines and receptions.

In February 2022, UNHCR issued a Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan, which calls on countries to keep their borders open for Afghans seeking international protection, suspend the forcible return of Afghan nationals, as well as for resettlement spaces to be allocated to Afghan refugees in Iran.

In April 2022, the Iranian Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced the undertaking of a Headcount of all undocumented Afghan nationals in Iran, including new arrivals. The Headcount was concluded on 30 June 2022. According to the MoI, approximately 2.6 million undocumented Afghan nationals participated in this exercise and received headcount slips. The slips' validity -initially until 22 October 2022- has been extended until 20 April 2023. UNHCR continues advocating for a more predictable and sustainable extension of the validity of the headcount slips.

According to the Ministry of Interior, the following foreign nationals are not eligible to extend their Headcount slips:

- Afghans in No Go Areas who did not register their request to relocate before 17 October 2022.
- Afghans present in areas other than the authorized area of residence as indicated in the Headcount slip.
- Other Afghans identified in multiple locations (prohibited and non-prohibited areas) and currently present in prohibited areas, even when holding a *Laisser Passer* specifically issued to authorize movement in and through No Go Areas.

80% of new arrivals approaching UNHCR had fled Afghanistan due to violence and fear of persecution.

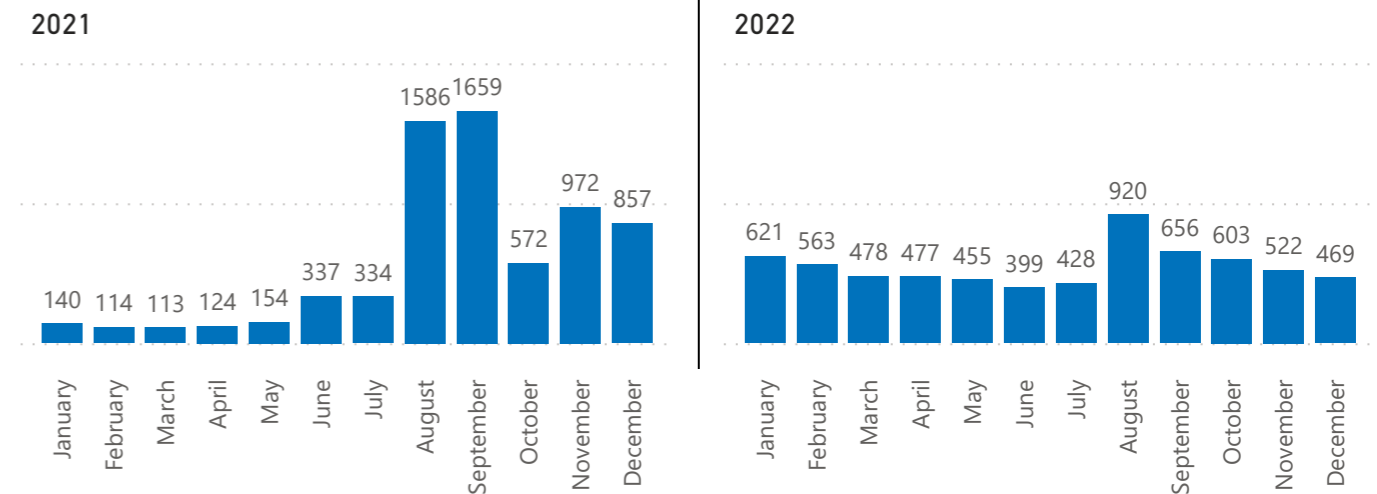
Number of newly arrived households who approached UNHCR

13,553

Number of newly arrived individuals

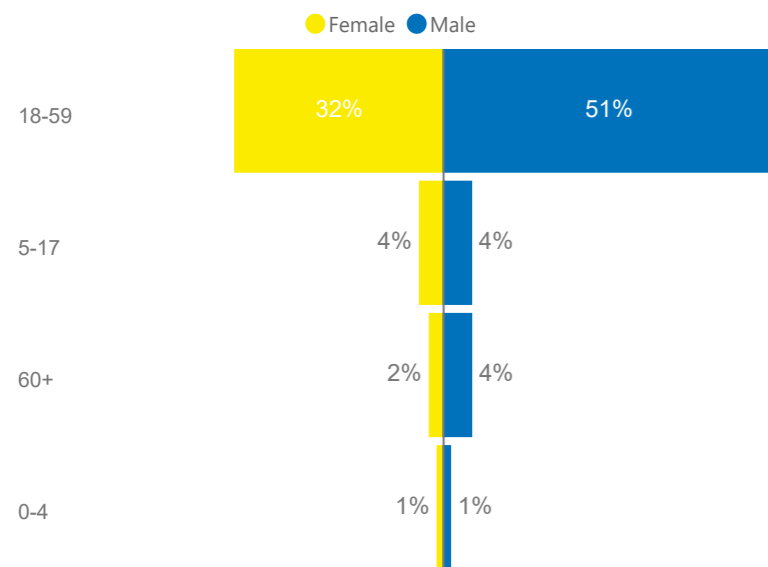
56,757

Number of newly arrived households per month and year

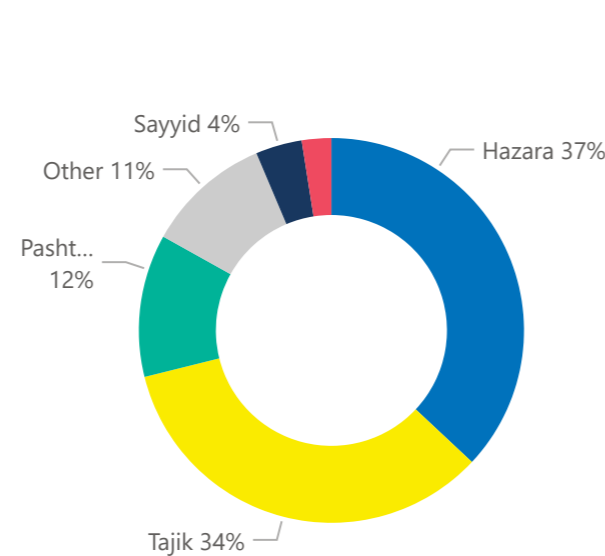


UNHCR RECORDS OF NEW ARRIVAL APPROACHES (SINCE NOV 2021)

Age/Gender breakdown of heads of household



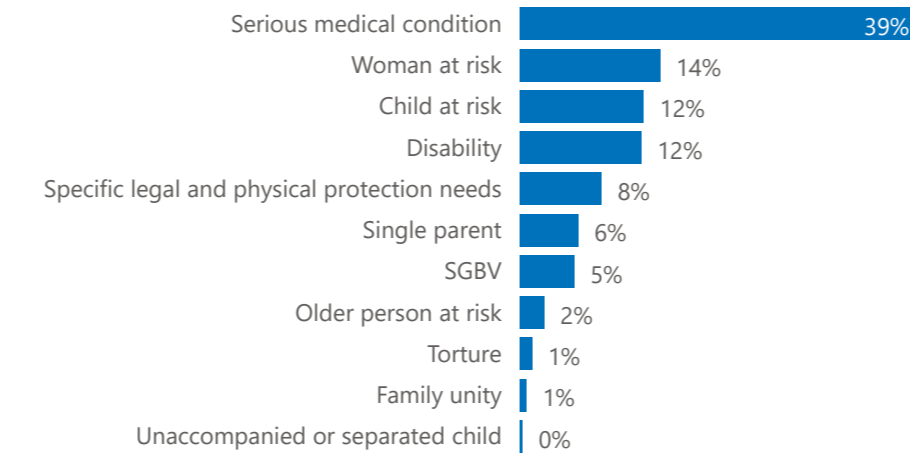
Ethnicity (Top 5)



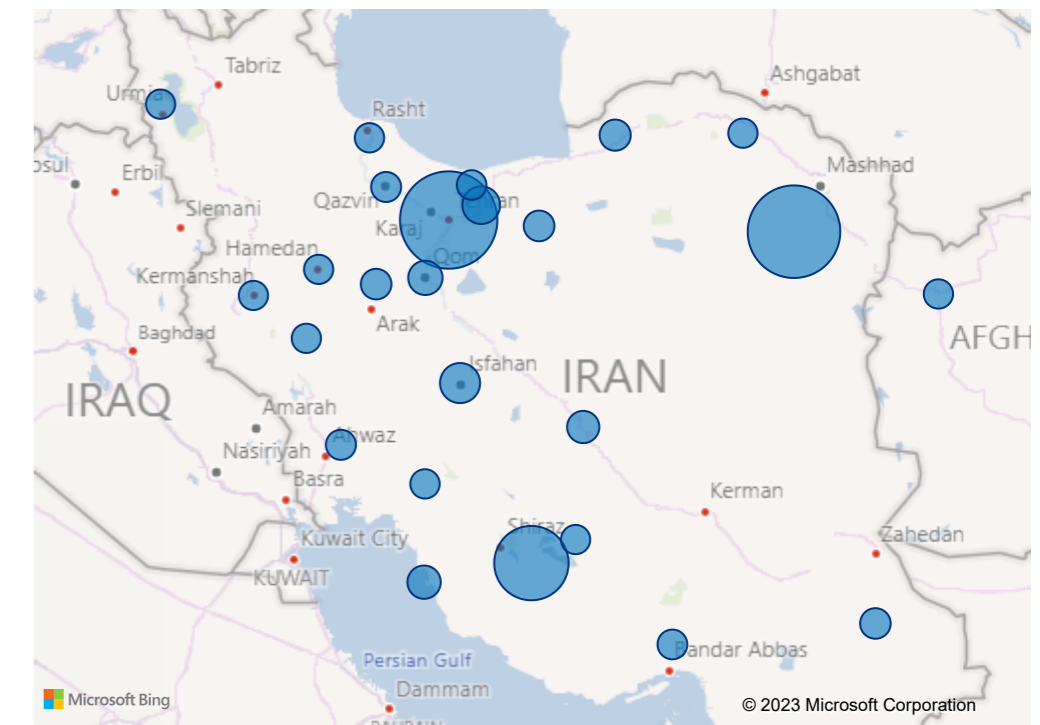
Number of refugees and asylum-seekers with specific needs

8,778

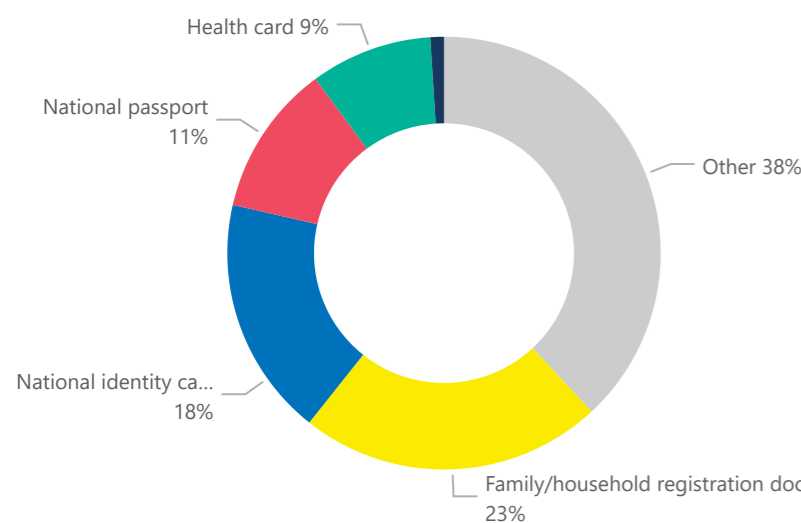
Reported specific needs



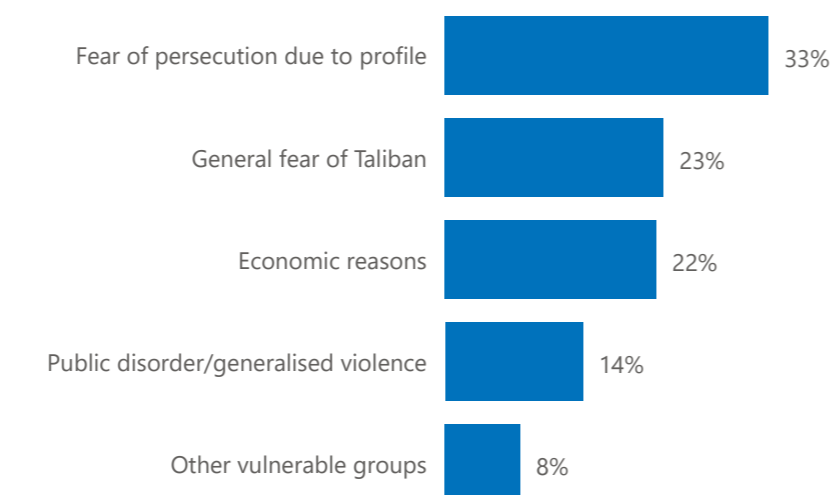
Province of residence



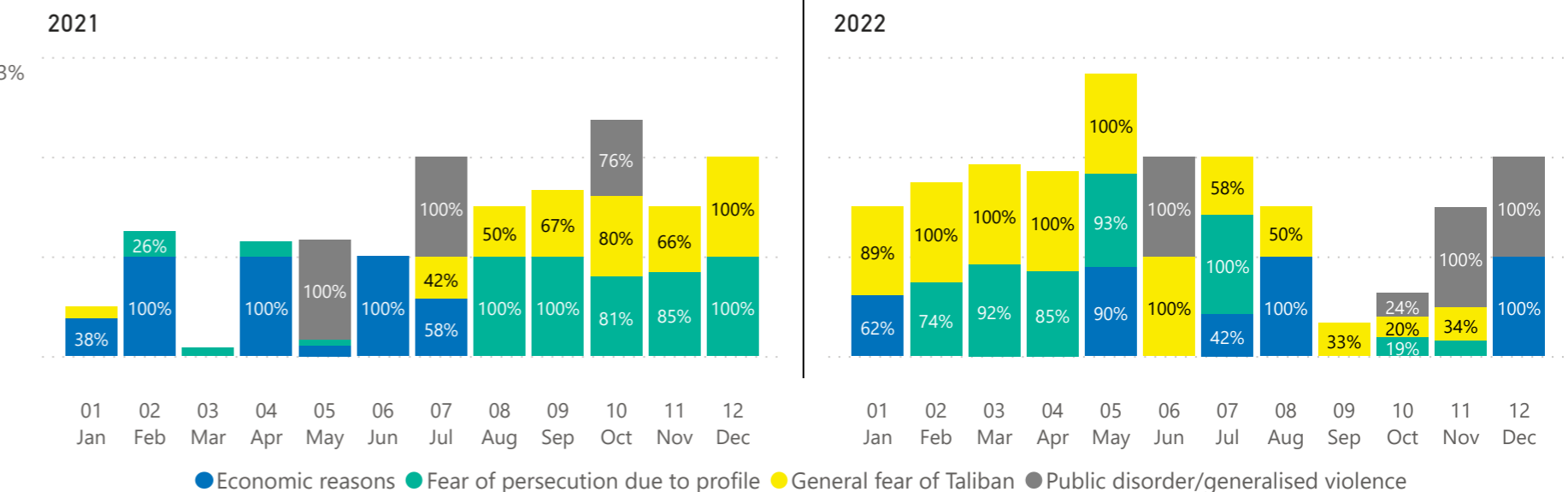
Document Type (Top 5)



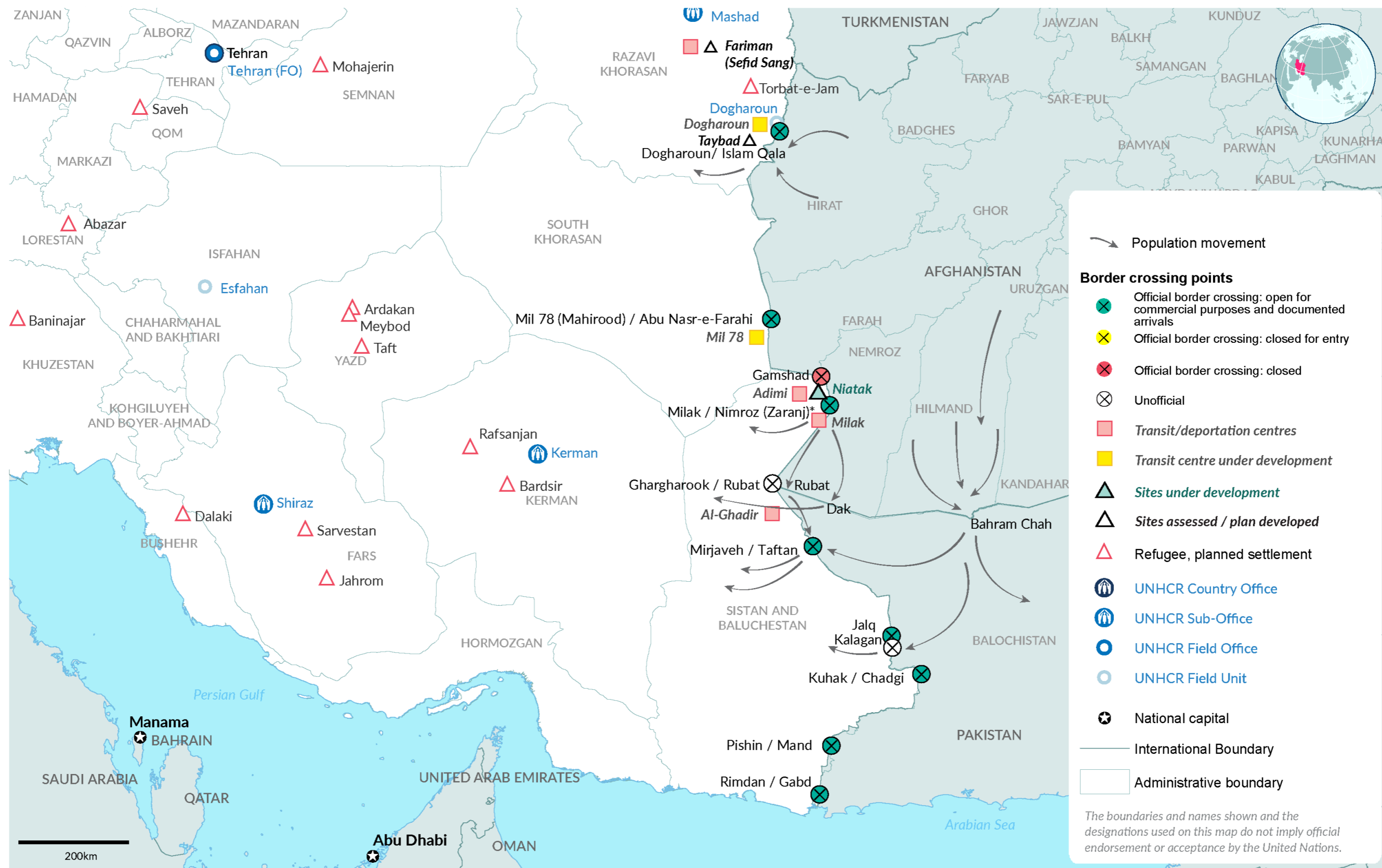
Reasons for flight



Top 3 reasons for flight trend/month



MAP OF BORDER CROSSINGS AND PROVISIONAL SITES



Borders between Iran and Afghanistan are open for Afghan passport-holders with valid visas for Iran, hampering access to territory of undocumented Afghans in need of international protection through official border points. UNHCR is aware of Afghans also accessing territory through unofficial border crossings. UNHCR and other actors, in coordination with BAFIA are involved in developing potential sites in border areas that will host new arrivals.